

**THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT ON GRANDCHILDREN WHEN BEING RAISED BY
THEIR GRANDPARENTS**

by

EMMARENTIA MAGRITHA FÜHRI

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SUPERVISOR: PROF H.M VOGEL

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was to investigate psychological effect on grandchildren when they are being raised by their grandparents. Considerable research has been done on the psychological effect on the grandparents, but very little on the effects on grandchildren, especially in South Africa.

By means of a mainly qualitative investigation, empirical data were collected through informal discussions, observations and projection media from four families and seven grandchildren in total.

The findings yielded a number of common themes among all the grandchildren, and yet others showed the influence of the attitude of the grandparents towards the situation.

KEYWORDS

Grandparents, grandchildren, psychological effect, raising, obstacles, attachment, social, emotional wellbeing, trauma, disorganized-insecure attachment

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CHAPTER 1

1 OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE

1.1 BACKGROUND

Newspapers and the other mass media typically report the factual information of a crime in great detail. These specifics often include the particulars of the person who had committed the crime, as well as the characteristics of the victim and their families. Unfortunately, the family of the individual who has committed the crime – or the victim's families – are often neglected by both the media and society in general.

Those that are most affected by the reporting of these incidents are often the children of the offenders or the victims. Such children may end up in an orphanage, or – if they are fortunate – be raised by a family member, such as their grandparents.

At a stage in their lives where such grandparents should be settling down and enjoy the quiet life, they now need to start all over again, raising young children or teenagers. Many of these children have been abused and neglected by the time they are taken in by the grandparents. In the cases where these children's parents have died, the children – with their serious emotional scars – are brought to their grandparents.

The grandparents need support and guidance to help and support these orphaned children, according to Hayslip and Kaminski (2005:262-269). The psychological impact of this process can be very severe to the well-being of both the grandparents and their grandchildren (Hayslip, Shore, Henderson & Lambert, 1998:164-173). According to a study by Pruchno and McKenney (2000:269-289), grandparents who toil hard at having a healthy relationship with their grandchildren, feel less burdened by the sudden change in lifestyle. Such grandparents sometimes see it as an opportunity to do better the second time around to instil moral values and old-fashion good manners in their grandchildren.

Along this vein, several research studies have been done on the effect this extended family structure has on grandparents. According to Fuller-Thompson, Minkler and

Driver (1997:37,406-411) there are many societal factors – such as substance abuse, neglect and the abuse of children – that contribute to the needs of grandparents to raise their grandchildren. Grandparents raising their grandchildren can also be negatively affected in a number of areas, such as psychological stress, physical health, economic resources and social support (Dowell, 1995:33, 27-30).

To date, there is insufficient research conducted on the psychological effects that this new extended family composition has on grandchildren.

1.2 LITERATURE STUDY

With regard to grandparents raising their grandchildren, it is mostly an adverse experience. However, there is research evidence that it can also be an enriching experience (Emick & Hayslip, 1999:48, 35-62). According to these two authors' research findings, grandparents often see this as an opportunity to try to improve on their own parenting skills the second time around. They can teach their grandchildren more traditional values and guide them to strengthen their religion. Additionally, grandparents have the opportunity to build a unique and very special bond with their grandchildren.

However, from most of the research findings (Fuller-Thompson *et al*, 1997:37, 406-411) it can be deduced that these experiences may also be very negative for some grandparents, due to complications encountered while raising their grandchildren (Emick & Hayslip, 1999:48, 35-62).

Grandparents who have to assume the responsibility for raising their grandchildren, frequently experience a deterioration in their general health. Such grandparents struggle with depression, insomnia, hypertension, diabetes and they find it difficult to perform their normal daily activities (Hayslip & Kaminski, 2005:45, 262-269; Minkler & Fuller-Thompson, 1999:1384-1389). These problems are not confined to the grandparents only, but it may likewise have an adverse effect on their grandchildren.

According to Minkler and Fuller-Thompson (1999:1384-1389), most of the grandparents who are raising their grandchildren experience physical limitations in their daily life, such as climbing stairs or walking a few blocks. Furthermore, research

indicates that such grandparents present various symptoms of poor health. According to Hayslip and Kaminski (2005:262-9), there can be further severe negative effects on them, such as poverty, marital problems, loss of hope and decline in psychological well-being.

For many grandchildren, on the other hand, the fact that they are being raised by their grandparents can vary between a very negative to a very positive experience. These diverse experiences can be influenced by the reasons why they are being raised by their grandparents; children with a history of trauma find it difficult to bond with their grandparents. The relationship between grandchildren and their grandparents can also be affected by the length of time the child has been with the grandparents. It is easier for a child – who has been with his/her grandparents from a young age – to have a better relationship with them, compared to a teenager who unexpectedly has to move in with grandparents (Dolbin-MacNab & Keiley, 2006:55, 564-575). Grandchildren, raised by their grandparents, are referred to as a custodial grandchild in research literature (Hayslip & Kaminski, 2008:3-15).

Children are taken away from their parents by social welfare for various reasons. One of these reasons is that parents are involved in crime-related issues and could put the children in danger.

According to Giarrusso, Feng, Wang and Silverstein (1996:6, 291-310), there are an increasing number of grandparents raising their grandchildren because of crime-related involvement of the parents. Additionally, some of the significant difficulties that are commonly experienced by extended families are poverty, stress, anxiety, low psychological well-being and poor health.

Very little research on the matter of grandparents taking in their grandchildren has been done in the South African context. Moreover, there is very little information on how different South African cultures handle problems such as poverty, isolation or psychological stress in these situations. However, in other countries, considerable research has been done about the effect of grandparents raising grandchildren (Hayslip & Kaminski, 2005:262-269; Fuller-Thomson & Minkler, 2005:131-139).

Research ventures on this topic tends to focus mostly on the grandparents, but very little research has been done on the effects it has on the grandchild. Even though 'grandparent-grandchild families' are not considered to be a traditional family system, they still need research focus as a family, as they have most of the characteristics of a family (Steinglass, 1984:14). Additionally, little research has been done on specific cases where parents leave their children – as a result of crime-related issues or accidental deaths.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.3.1 Defining the problem

It is clear from the literature study that there are some areas of the grandparents-grandchildren question that have not been researched in-depth and are in need of further investigation and research. The current study's focus is to explore the following hypotheses:

1. The psychological effect on grandchildren when they are being raised by their grandparents.
2. The children's way of handling their situation according to their
 - Emotional
 - Socially, i.e. how do they perform in groups or their ability to make friends

1.3.2 Demarcation

The ensuing aspects will be explored, with specific focus on grandparents-grandchildren families – where the parents are absent – as a result of criminal activities or other causes of deaths.

1.3.3 Obstacles

From the research from Minkler and Fuller-Thompson (1999:1384-1389), some common obstacles were identified, and – in the current study – these hindrances will be explored when working and interacting with the identified families.

In this qualitative study, four extended families were selected and only psychological effects were considered. Other external aspects, such as academic performance,

classroom conduct, etc. were not included, although they may be referred to where necessary.

1.3.4 Aim

The aim with the study is to explore what psychological effects grandchildren experience in extended families – when living with their grandparents.

In order to provide mechanisms and support to extended families in coping with their predicaments, it firstly has to be understood what the impact of their previous experiences, and other related factors, is.

1.4 RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

The study at hand followed a hermeneutics design and a qualitative empirical method. According to Berger and Luckmann (1967) hermeneutics mainly focuses on language and interaction between individuals. The hermeneutics method furthermore allows for the understanding of situations; looking through the eyes of the participant and focuses on the view that reality is socially constructed. It involves '*meaning*' in a social context; the recapturing of meanings of interacting with others. It is applied to recover and reconstruct the intensions of the other actors in a particular situation (Held, 1980).

1.4.1 Research paradigm

A paradigm can be seen as an interpretive framework of a researcher's perspectives, beliefs and values about his/her surroundings. For the current study, it provides a platform to explore how the effect on a child – being raised by his/her grandparents – can be investigated and understood. Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006:40) define a research paradigm as a perspective that helps to provide a rationale for, and commits the researcher to a structured method for data collection.

Additionally, a research paradigm's purpose is to provide the essential structure for a study and helps to determine which questions need to be asked and which methodology will be used.

In the study at hand an anti-positivist paradigm will be applied – which can be seen as a naturalistic analysis of human reality and behaviour (Cohen, Manion &

Morrison, 2002:19-20). Furthermore, the approach acknowledges that reality is subjective and multi-layered, as well as that there can be many explanations for social reality (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000:17-20). In addition, an anti-positivist paradigm emphasises human interaction with phenomena in their daily lives and suggests a qualitative approach for research. Consequently, a qualitative research design was applied in the current study.

1.4.2 Research design

According to Blanche et al., (2006:34), a research design can be described as a strategic framework that functions as a bridge between the research question and the implementation of the research. Sellitz, Jahoda, Deutsch and Cook (1965:50) further contend that a research design guides the researcher in collecting data and analyzing it in a way that aims to combine relevance to the research goals.

Imperatively, research methods that are applied should yield accurate and trustworthy answers to the research question. The research design also helps to highlight the confines of the interventions, assist with the interpretation of the results and will correspondingly specify precisely how the data should be evaluated (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:20-30).

1.4.3 Research method

Blanche et al., (2006:47-48, 76-77) describe the qualitative research method as a technique to help gather data and analyze information. It relies on verbal, rather than mathematical or inferential statistical procedures. Qualitative research is oriented and based on detailed descriptions of what is being observed in a certain context. The method can also be seen as a systematic statistical study that can emphasize naturally occurring phenomena.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:320-325), qualitative research has to be done in a natural setting, as it is applied to study behaviour as it occurs naturally. The approach assists in forming a better understanding of the situational context – which is essential – for the reason that it is context-sensitive. The researcher is in direct interaction with the setting and the participants, in order to collect data directly.

When data are analyzed and synthesized in order to generate themes about the research topic, inductive reasoning is used (Mouly, 1978). When qualitative research is conducted, the researcher has to be concerned about the qualities, perspectives and characteristics of the participants – as well as the specific context when examining the potential impact on a subject – in order to get a better understanding of the phenomena or reality (Blanche et al., 2006:47-48, 76-77).

In addition, McMillan and Schumacher (2010:323) allege that qualitative research is a flexible design that can change as the study progresses and more information becomes available. However, when doing qualitative research, it is important for the researcher to remain objective and without preconceptions; this will help the researcher to pay attention to the participants' meanings, experiences and insights into their social situations and behaviour. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:395-392) continues to describe qualitative research as producing descriptions of people's thoughts, actions, beliefs and perceptions. Its main concern is to understand these phenomena from the participants' perspective.

For the present study, interactive case studies were used in order to gain information, and to provide an understanding of the psychological effects on grandchildren – when being raised by their grandparents. Case studies are mostly descriptive in nature and aim to provide in-depth descriptions and insights into a person's situation (Blanche et al., 2006:140-461). The study at hand is furthermore grounded on a theoretical approach, applying multiple sources of data – found in the context setting – in order to come to analytical inferences. The strengths of case studies lie in a high construct validity, in-depth insights and the establishment of effective rapport with the research subjects.

Along this vein, Nisbet and Watt (1984:72) define a case study as a specific example that occurs frequently – to illustrate a general principle; it's an instance of action. Case studies have the ability to penetrate instances that would not have been possible with quantitative research. In addition to this, case studies allow the researcher to gain understanding of causality (Cohen et al., 2002:181).

For the current research project, four families were selected with the goal of gaining an understanding – seen from their own perspectives. Detailed accounts and analyses of the data were used to gain knowledge and understanding of the psychological effect that occurs in grandchildren – when this new extended family system is formed.

1.4.4 Selection of respondents

In the current research study, the researcher utilized purposeful sampling. In this regard, Creswell and Clark (2011:173) state that, “*Researchers intentionally select (or recruit) participants who have experienced the central phenomenon or the key concept being explored in the study*”.

1.4.5 Data collection

In the current study, the following data collection strategies were implemented (as well as combinations, i.e. triangulation¹):

- semi-structured one-on-one interviews
- group interviews
- open-ended questions
- projective media
- observations
- field notes
- documents
- artifact collection

1.4.6 Data analyses

Interviews were done with the selected families to establish their level of functioning, i.e. how they cope with ordinary everyday activities, such as shopping, picnicking or going to church. Group activities were also included – what kind of activities they enjoy as a family together. Group interviews were done in informal situations and were flexible enough to suit the individual needs of the respective families. The focus

¹ Triangulation can be described as a technique where more than one method of data collection is used to study a particular object (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002:112). In addition, Campbell and Fiske (1959) maintain that triangulation is a very powerful method to demonstrate concurrent validity – especially in qualitative research.

was to explore the psychological effects that the new extended family structure had on the grandchildren.

The psychological interactions were explored by observing their general well-being, future expectations and their ability to do normal age-appropriate tasks, as well as their overall emotional state.

Informal observation was done through all the phases of the research, in order to understand the level of functioning of the families. Open-ended and semi-structured questions were asked to each grandchild in order to give them the opportunity to answer in their own way.

One of the particular aims of the present research study was to do in-depth interviews with the grandchildren – who were being raised by their grandparents – using projection media to assess them. In addition, ongoing observations were made to determine how a particular family structure operates and how the new extended family-experience influences both grandparents and grandchildren.

1.5 CHAPTER ALLOCATION

Chapter 1 comprises of the introduction to the current study and an exposé to the research problem.

Chapter 2 contains an in-depth literature study about the research topic, as well as other related themes that are linked to the research question stated above.

In Chapter 3, the design and research methods are described, as well as the research tools that were used to explore the topic.

Chapter 4 presents the research findings, as well as a discussion on both the findings and the research process.

The research project will be summarised in Chapter 5.

1.6 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

In the current study the following terms are applied:

1.6.1 Psychological well-being

According to Cowen (1994), psychological wellness describes a person who has effective interpersonal relationships and is able to master age-appropriate tasks. This person feels a sense of belonging and has a purpose and a sense of control over his/her own life.

1.6.2 Obstacles

The online *Dictionary.com* (<http://dictionary.reference.com>) defines an obstacle as an obstruction, hindrance or impediment – something that interferes with, or prevents action or progress. Such obstacle can be anything – material or non-material – that blocks a process, literally or figuratively.

1.6.3 Family systems

According to systems theory, everyone in a family structure has a specific role, and for this role there are specific sub-rules – outlined by the family. Relationship agreements predict how everyone in the family reacts to the other members. In such a family system, patterns develop that can predict how one's behaviour will change the behaviour of the other members (Steinglass, 1984:582).

In a family structure, the action of one of the members will typically influence the rest of the family and *vice versa*. The systems theory acknowledges that, when one member has a problem, the rest of the system will be affected (Steinglass, 1984:582).

1.6.4 Custodial grandchild

When grandparents take over the role as sole primary caregivers, an affected child is known as a custodial child (Hayslip & Kaminski, 2008:3-15).

1.6.5 Attachment

Hayslip and Kaminski (2008) believe that bonding between a primary caregiver and a child is very important and forms the basis for coping, negotiating relationships and it also helps to develop personality (Porter, 2003: 60-70).

The attachment theory of Bowlby (1982) explains that an attachment figure is the person to whom an infant has an inherent motivation to stay physically close to. When this person is absent, it causes psychological and emotional distress like

sadness, anxiety and anger. A child forms an attachment – even when circumstances are poor – as, for example, when a child is being maltreated or abused. Therefore, the loss of any attachment figure is very agonising and also very significant.

1.6.6 Disorganised-insecure attachment

Main and Solomon (1986:95-124) contend that inconsistent behaviour from parents might be a contributing factor in disorganised-insecure attachment. In later research, Main and Hesse (1990:161-182) argue that parents – who act as figures of both fear and reassurance to a child – may contribute to a disorganised-attachment style. This occurs when a child feels both comforted and frightened by the parent – this leads to confusion.

1.7 SUMMARY

This chapter presents an overview of what this research study seeks to accomplish and how it aims to achieve this. The research design, methodology, aims and objectives, sampling issues and outline of the study have been identified. In the next chapter, a review of the research literature related to this topic will be presented.

CHAPTER 2

2 LITERATURE STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Grandparenting should be a time when grandparents get to enjoy their grandchildren without having the responsibilities that come with being the parent. This is a time when grandparents should be able to spoil the young ones and enjoy the carefree living that comes with old age.

However, this has all changed, as increasing numbers of grandparents have to step in and become the primary caregivers. This phenomenon is seen escalating every day, because of the uprooted lives of the parents.

All over the world, grandparents are shifting roles to provide the 'safe houses' that children need. In South Africa, it has mainly been for economic reasons that parents leave their children with their grandparents; this custom has been accepted for generations.

In the past few years, however, children are brought to grandparents' doorsteps for other reasons – parents are inept to care for their own children. These parents are absent, recurrently for crime-related issues that make it impossible for them to care for their children. Even though this phenomenon is being experienced all over the world, little has been researched about the impact that this new trend has on the relationships between the South-African grandchild and his grandparents, who have to intervene and become surrogate 'parents' for the second time.

Becoming grandparents usually occurs in a person's middle-age years, when they have a sense of completion and satisfaction – and can reflect on their own lifetime's successes (Ashford, LeCroy & Lortie, 2006). It is in this phase that it is no longer uncommon for grandparents – especially grandmothers – to help with the care of the grandchildren. These are the times where grandparents should enjoy the caring, sharing, and cossetting of their grandchildren, without the responsibility of parenting the child.

However, in many cases, things don't happen according to plan, and grandchildren find themselves without parents for a variety of reasons. Without parents, these unfortunate children will probably be taken to a welfare institution or foster home, or – eventually – their grandparents. Furthermore, many grandparents have no choice in the matter and feel 'trapped' assuming responsibility for their grandchildren. They try to keep the grandchildren in the family, thus the only option is to become sole caregivers. Most grandparents look forward to a carefree and stress-free retirement, but now have to step in and become parents all over again (Fuller-Thompson *et al.*, 1997:37, 406-411).

The US Census of 2000 show that one of the fastest growing family forms in the United States is grandparent-headed families. The US Census Bureau avowed in 2006 that 4, 6 million children, under 18 years of age, lived in a grandparent-run household. Grandparent care is most frequently experienced by African-American children, with 12 per cent living in grandparent-run households (US Census Bureau, 2006a, 2006b).

In this regard, Bayder and Brooks-Gunn (1998:47, 385-393) report that

"43 per cent of grandmothers provide care for their grandchildren on a regular basis".

"Assuming custody of a grandchild is out-of-sync with developmental life tasks" (Burnette, 1997:78, 489-501).

"A small, but growing population of middle-aged and older adults is becoming the physical and legal custodians of their grandchildren" (Grinstead, Leder, Jensen & Bond, 2003:44, 318-326; Hayslip & Kasminski, 2005:45, 262-269).

"Between 1980 and 1990 the number of children in the United States living with their grandparents or other relatives increased by 44 per cent, and in a third of these homes, no parents was present" (Saluter, 1992: No. 461).

"In 1997, 3.7 million grandparents were raising their grandchildren, and the majority, 2.3 million, were grandmothers" (Lugaila, 1998: Series 20:514).

Any grandparent can become a custodial grandparent, whether they are from a high socio-economical, or a poor society. According to Casper and Bryson (1998), it is possible that the differences in the structure of a family will have an effect on the grandchild's well-being.

It is important to note that ethnicity has a considerable influence on how extended families adjust to grandparent-headed families (Hayslip & Kaminski, 1998:164-173). It is, furthermore, clear that low income and low education levels also play a significant role in the adjustment process. Younger grandparents seem to have higher psychological well-being levels, such as depression and anxieties, while older grandparents tend to have lower physiological well-being.

Along this vein, Casper and Bryson (1998:26) maintain that

"...compared with other households, homes in which grandmothers are raising grandchildren alone are more likely to be poor, more likely to be receiving public assistance, and the grandmothers are less likely to have health insurance. Census data also indicate variations by race and ethnicity, with 4.1 per cent of white children, 6.5 per cent of Hispanic children, and 13.5 per cent of African-American children living with their grandparents or other relatives."

2.2 FAMILY SYSTEMS

According to systems theory, everyone in a family structure has a specific role, and for this role there are specific sub-rules – outlined by the family. Relationship agreements predict how everyone in the family reacts to the other members. In such a family system, patterns develop that can predict how one's behaviour will change the behaviour of the other members (Steinglass, 1984:582).

"Defining the family as a system not only implies that the family is comprised of a set of units or elements standing in some consistent relationship or interactional stance with one another, but further that the behaviour of the family system is best understood as a product of its organizational characteristics. (Steinglass, 1984:582)."

2.3 GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

Grandparents usually take pride in their families; their caring is diligent and they take pride in doing what they think is necessary to support and help their families (Ruiz,

2004:8). Because of these attributes of grandparents – their unique outlook on life – as well as their moral obligation, it can be a great motivation to step out of retirement to help and support their family on a more permanent basis.

According to Cox (2000:253-267), grandparents are often thrown into re-parenting for which they may be ill prepared, leaving them feeling unsure and confused. Cox goes on and contend that raising children, particularly teenagers, is a very tedious obligation for which grandparents lack physical energy. Grandparents may be ill, or have overall poor health and this may effectively impede on their ability to fulfil their demands.

Even though grandparents had themselves been parents not too long ago, it is considerably different the second time. Grandparents are much older, and every minute that passes their world becomes more different and diverse. Grandparents who have to raise their grandchildren single-handedly face many challenges. One such challenge is balancing the role between becoming parents, while being grandparents. Since the grandparents become the parents, the highly valued grandparent-grandchild relationship sometimes cease to exist (Cox, 2000:253-267).

There are many reasons why custodial grandparents experience a higher risk of behavioural and emotional difficulties raising their grandchildren. For many of these grandparents, this role arrived unplanned and ambiguously with considerable ambivalence (Landry-Meyer & Newman, 2004:1005-1025; Weber & Waldrop, 2000: 27-46).

"Additional challenges to raising custodial grandchildren include inadequate support, social stigma, isolation, disrupted leisure and retirement plans, age-related adversities, anger toward grandchildren's parents and financial strain" (Whitley, Kelley & Sipe, 2001:105-114).

"Although grandparents are often seen as both the symbolic and instrumental safeguards of the succeeding generation during times of strain or reorganization." (Thomas, 1990:117-169).

"Increasing numbers of grandparents have been confronted with unconventional parental caregiving situations that threaten their

morale and increase their role confusion" (Sands & Goldberg-Glen, 1996; Emick & Hayslip, 1996:43, 135-154).

Studies have shown that caregivers tend to postpone medical treatment, and because of this, they show excessive health problems and aggravated medical conditions (Dowdell, 1995:33,27-30; Haglund, 2000:120-135; Waldrop & Weber, 2001:461-472; Whitley, Kelly & Sipe, 2001: 105-114). Health risks may become exceptionally high and include the elevated risk of coronary heart disease (Lee, *et al.*, 2003), as well as general lower levels of health and impaired functional abilities (Minkler & Fuller-Thomson, 1999; Solomon & Marx, 1998:14,31-39; Young & Dawson, 2003:111-122).

Moreover, recent studies reveal that grandparents of African-American and American-Indian/Alaskan origins in extended families show *more* limited physical functioning than people of similar age in traditional families (Minkler & Fuller-Thomson, 2005:82-92).

Recently, research studies by Grinstead, *et al.* (2003:318-326); Hayslip and Kaminski (2005:262-269) also indicated that many grandparents that have to assume custody of their grandchildren, have problems with their physical and mental health. Increased stress levels have been associated with both primary, as well as supplemental grandparents (Musil & Ahmad, 2002:96-121) and were also negatively associated with the wellbeing of grandparents (Sands, Goldberg-Glen & Thornton, 2005:45, 65-82).

Studies that compared custodial and non-custodial grandparents on *depression* yielded mixed results, with elevated levels of depression documented only in some (Kolomer, McCallion & Janicki, 2002; Minkler & Fuller-Thomson, 2001:56, 199-205) – but not in others (Musil & Ahmad, 2002:96-121).

Custodial grandparents report lower self-assessed health than grandparents who are not caregivers, and grandparents who are raising their grandchildren feel that their health has been negatively affected (Graff & Engle, 2008; Musil & Ahmad, 2002:96-121) – particularly in areas such as physical functioning, bodily pain, role- and social functioning, as well as their general health perception (Whitley *et al.*, 2001:105-114).

They further report more restrictions in their daily activities and more health problems than their non-caregiving counterparts (Musil & Ahmad, 2002:96-121; Bayder & Brooks-Gunn, 1998:385-393; Fuller-Thomson & Minkler, 2000).

Social support is very important for grandparents when coping with the struggles of out-of-sequence life events and isolation from their friends when standing in for their grandchildren (Hayslip *et al.*, 1998:164-173). Most custodian grandparents report losing many of their friends when they become custodial grandparents (Wohl, Lahner & Jooste, 2003:195-221). In addition, they struggle to find support because of the age differences between themselves and active parents.

A further aspect is conflict – it has a way of affecting one's health – and raising grandchildren can be negative and full of unwelcomed conflict. Research has shown that, when conflict in grandparents persists for many years, the conflicted relationships become increasingly difficult to terminate (Krause & Rook, 2001:273-294).

"Indeed, intergenerational conflict is often produced by the very circumstances that caused the assumption of care duties by grandparents" (Goodman & Silverstein, 2002:42, 676 – 689).

Conflict regularly occurs when grandparents raise their grandchildren. The grandchildren might have experienced a great deal of trauma and abuse, which may have led to emotional and behavioural scars (Hayslip, *et al.*, 1998:164-173; Pruchno & McKenney, 2002:444- 452).

When grandchildren show considerable behavioural problems – and there exists a great deal of conflict between the grandparents and grandchildren – it can have a dire negative effect on the mental and physical health of the grandparent caregivers (Bachman & Chase-Lansdale, 2005:475-487; Burnette, 1999:69, 305-318; Musil, 2000:129-145; Sands & Goldberg-Glen, 2000:49, 97-105; Young & Dawson, 2003:9, 111-122).

This conflict can be caused by many different factors, such as overprotection and criticism from the grandparents, that can lead to distress and psychological disorders in the grandchildren (Miklowitz, 2004:667-688).

In contrast, other researchers have found no difference in health status between primary and supplemental grandparent caregivers (Giarrusso et al., 1996; Goodman & Silverstein, 2002; Musil & Ahmad, 2002:96-121; Pruchno & McKenney, 2000:6, 269-289). In a 'skipped-generation' household – the parents are absent – the consequences of support insufficiency may be more prevalent for custodial grandparents. This may lead to lower support levels, resulting in lower life-satisfaction and ultimately greater stress (Gerard, Landry-Meyer & Roe, 2006: 359-383).

Both formal and informal social support have been found to contribute to positive well-being (Sands et al., 2005:65-82) and to reduce stress (Gerard et al., 2006:359-383) among custodial grandparents. Krause (2001:273-294) and Antonucci (2001) agree that when grandparents need to raise their grandchildren, some challenges arise. The grandparents may feel that what complicates the challenges is the lack of both emotional and instrumental support from others. This can result in isolation, depression and poorer health. They also maintain that the availability of social support can contribute to the success of grandparent-headed households.

Even though being a 'parent' for the second time involves great responsibility, it also has multiple challenges. The grandparents find some challenges satisfying and it gives them a sense of purpose, as well as a feeling of belonging (Goldberg-Glen & Thornton, 2005:45, 65-82).

Musil and Ahmad's (2002:96-121) findings indicate that caregivers that use active coping strategies, reduce the effects of stress on mental and physical health. However, avoiding coping strategies was associated with more clinical depression.

Orb and Davey (2005:24,162-168) indicate that the

"...resiliency of grandparents allows them to learn how to access the services and how to demand respect for their rights, resulting in meeting the challenges and overcoming their stress".

Additionally, research has shown that, when custodian grandparents maintain a supportive relationship with family members, they tend to have better overall health (Uchino, 2004). It is also true that when these grandparents reach out and receive external support and help from family members as well as friends, they also experience better health and life satisfaction (Musil, 2000:129-145). In particular, 'skipped-generation' grandparents experience less support than do three-generation caregivers (Musil & Ahmad, 2002:96-121) and non-caregivers (Musil *et al.*, 2006:89-98).

When custodian grandparents are positive about their abilities to be a parent for the second time, the experience can be very positive. According to Kornhaber (1996:8, 190-194),

"confidence arises from an enhanced ability to view oneself objectively—to 'know' the self. These attitudes may be expressed through either individual action at the personal or family level or joint action at the community or national level".

When these grandparents are positive, their attitude can have a direct, indirect or reciprocal effect on both themselves and the grandchild. A direct effect is the influence such grandparents have on their grandchildren through mutual activities and interactions. These actions help to fuse family values together, while history and cultural values open the opportunity for teaching (Szinovacz, 1998).

Likewise, custodian grandparents can create the opportunity to become role models for their grandchildren. According to Hayslip and Kaminski (2005:262-269), such children have more autonomy in decision-making, better school performance and less deviant behaviour. Kornhaber (1996:8, 190-194) found that

"...children who were in their grandparents' care, were less rebellious and more grateful than other children."

Smith (1995:89-112) also concluded that

"grandparents act as an important source of secure attachment for young children". "Hence, grandparents raising grandchildren can provide a sense of security, encouragement, love and structure."

More important is the fact that grandparents often act as a 'safety net' to mend the damages created through drug abuse, death, family violence, incarceration, HIV/AIDS or divorce – that 'their children' have created – and their grandchildren have been exposed to.

2.4 PARENTS' MISDEMEANOURS

In many cases, grandparents have to intercede and take possession of the parents' responsibility, owing to the incapacity of their 'own children' to be parents. This responsibility is, in most cases, not something that the grandparents have expected. However, they often feel they are the only solution in protecting their grandchildren from becoming part of the foster-care system (Somary & Stricker, 1998:53-62).

When parents are incapable of caring for, or even unwilling to care for their children, the grandparents are usually the ones that voluntarily accept the accountability of raising their grandchildren (Doucette-Dudman & LaCure, 1996). In cases where the parents are indifferent about their own children, or are incompetent, the caregiving decisions should preferably be transferred to the grandparents, resulting in new – extended – family structures.

In instances of abuse, the well-being and safety of the child is of extreme importance – custodianship must be awarded expeditiously (Landry, 1999:381-399). Some of the other reasons that grandparents assume the care of grandchildren are: children born from teenage pregnancies; parental neglect or abuse; substance abuse; ailments or death of the parents; imprisonment and parental developmental or mental illnesses (Goodman *et al.*, 2004:26, 287-305; Whitley, Kelley & Sipe, 2001:26, 105-114; Roe & Minkler, 1998:22, 25-32).

In the case of most of the above-mentioned demeanours, the grandchildren are directed to the grandparents through child welfare agencies, by informal arrangements of legal guardianship, or – in some cases – adoption. This transition

can be gradual or can be very sudden and may occur shortly after a grandchild's birth, or when they are older (Messing, 2006:28, 1415-1434).

When the parent is absent, because of a criminal offence or neglecting their children, the grandparents have to come to terms with their own feelings of anger, frustration or sadness, and they can sometimes feel that the grandchild's emotional burdens are too heavy for them. Chenoweth (2000:307-326) argues that most parents are absent or marginally involved in their children's lives for different reasons, such as substance abuse, child abuse, or neglect (Fuller-Thompson, Minkler & Driver, 1997:37, 406-411).

One of the most prevailing parental misdemeanours today is substance abuse. It affects not only the adult, but also the whole family (Child Welfare League, 2008: October 2, 2010).

“Over half of grandparents who raise grandchildren reported that parental substance abuse was the main reason for receiving custody of the child” (Leder, Grinstead & Torres, 2007:333-352).

When a parent struggles with substance abuse, it is extremely demanding on him to care for a child. This inability may lead to the child being removed from the home. In such a case, the grandparents usually intervene, in an effort to protect their grandchildren. Somary and Stricker (1998:38, 53-62) mention that even if such parents choose to seek help or treatment, the process takes time, the children will need some interim measure to be taken for their care during the absence of the parent.

Along this line of arguing, it is true that, when children are raised by parents who abuse substances, they might be at risk regarding social, emotional and mental health problems (Barnard & McKeageaney, 2004:99, 556-557). These children might come from homes that lack structure – and this may result in even more behavioural problems – when grandparents take over the parenting and attempt to implement some form of structure (Cox, 2008:6, 467-469).

Neglecting a child includes disregarding educational, physical and emotional needs. Any trauma can make the transition from parent to grandparent very demanding for a child; the child must deal not only with the emotional trauma of the abuse or neglect, but also the new environment and the loss of a parent (Hayslip *et al.*, 1998:164-173).

About 60% of children who have mothers who are incarcerated live with their grandparents, and most live with their maternal grandparents" (Bloom, 1995:23).

Many of these children have suffered severe trauma and were witnesses to their parent(s) being arrested and taken away. According to Bloom (1995:23) this trauma can lead to feelings of guilt, shame and anger in the child, as well as the grandparent.

Pinson-Milburn, Fabian and Schlossberg *et al.*, (1996:74, 548-554) assert that a typical reason why grandparents give care to their grandchildren relates to the grandchildren's parent's substance abuse, child abuse and neglect, teenage pregnancy, death, illness, divorce, incarceration and HIV-AIDS.

When a grandparent has the sole responsibility to care for their grandchildren, the parents acquire varied and alternative roles. The parents may interact sporadically, or daily, or interaction could be non-existent. It could be that parents have little to no right to their child(ren) and when they do contact the child, it will be a criminal offense. With visitation there must be supervision by a child welfare agency or arranged by the grandparents (Crumbley & Little, 1997).

"A commonly reported pattern of involvement is one in which the parent is emotionally isolated, distant, or in conflict with the grandparent or other family members". (Goodman, 2003:54, 281-296;

"Regardless of the nature of their involvement, parents remain emotionally salient to grandchildren and the family system". (Weber & Waldrop, 2000:33, 27-46).

Orb and Davey (2005:24,162-168) found that

"...grandparents face emotional pressure from the constant battles with the child's parents who create anxiety and stress".

"Furthermore, aspects of the grandmother-parent relationship are related to her wellbeing, for example, parents – isolated due to substance abuse or other serious problems – contribute to the grandmother's greater depression and lowered life-satisfaction".
(Goodman, 2007: 65, 231-258).

It is sometimes very hard for grandparents to face the fact that their own children are not equipped to raise their children. Some of these affected grandparents might feel ashamed or angry at their children for neglecting or abusing their grandchildren. Feelings of despondency towards the grandchildren – who now have to grow up without parents – might make the relationship between the grandchild and the grandparent even more demanding. According to Hayslip and Kaminski (1996:164-173), the grandparent's relationship with both their grandchildren and their own adult children impacts negatively on their roles as caregivers.

2.5 PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS ON GRANDCHILDREN

Even though the number of children who are being raised by their grandparents has doubled in the last 30 years, according to Lugaila and Overturf (2004:32, 669-684), the focus still remain on the grandparents and not so much on the grandchildren.

The only time that grandchildren are considered in research is when researchers want to emphasise the impact on the grandparents' well-being, viz. their ability to adjust to changes in the grandparents' household (e.g., Hayslip *et al.*, 1998:164-173; Pruchno & McKenney, 2002:57,444-452; Billing, Ehrle & Kortenkamp, 2002:46; Smith & Palmieri, 2007:1303-1310; Solomon & Marx, 1995:35, 386- 394).

The perspective of the grandchildren has generally been neglected by researchers, even though they (the grandchildren) are ostensibly very important. It is only when it is attempted to gain an understanding of the dynamics of the family structure, that the grandchildren are included in research studies. This inattention becomes even more important when one recognise the impact this change has on a grandchild's

emotional well-being (Carpenter & Clyman, 2004:926, 673-686). Research findings indicate that these children are normally at very high risk of emotional and behavioural problems (Smith & Palmieri, 2007:1303-1310).

The quality of parenting is determined by three sets of factors: the personal resources of the caregivers, the characteristics of the child and the contextual sources of stress and support. These factors are all valuable in understanding variations in custodial grand-parenting (Belsky, 1984:55, 83-96).

The age of the grandchild is also significant, as it will influence the adjustment process (Saywer & Dubowitz, 1994:18, 587-597). A child who enters kinship at a more matured age will adjust better than a child who enters kinship at a very young age. Hayslip and Kaminski (1998:164-173) suggest that the relative age of both grandparents and grandchildren is likely to affect the caregiving relationship and probably the development of the grandchild.

According to Edwards (1998:35, 173-181) the majority of grandchildren – being raised by their grandparents – manifest emotional, behavioural and academic difficulties in their school environment. Edwards (1998:35, 173-181) also reports a lack of communication between grandparents and teachers, and that it could be because of a lack of knowledge on the grandparents' side. Edwards (1998:35, 173-181) also recognised that significantly more grandchildren raised by their grandparents suffer from psychopathology.

Many grandparents are unaware of the resources that are nowadays available – which were non-existent when they were at school (Silverstein & Vehvilainen, 2000:253-267). In a study done by Silverstein and Vehvilainen (2000:253-267), 42% of grandchildren raised by their grandparents have special needs, including learning difficulties, ADHD, depression and developmental disruptions.

Solomon and Marx (1995:386-394) contend that children – who are being raised by their grandparents – are more likely to repeat at least one grade at school and might be at pronounced jeopardy of suffering from learning difficulties, than their peers.

Additional research done by Edwards (1998: 35, 173-181) and Hayslip and Shore (2000: 6, 367-384) revealed the following:

"...although the research in this area is fairly limited, several authors have reported typically high rates of cognitive, emotional and behavioural difficulties (e.g. hyperactivity, learning disorders, compositionality and depression) among custodial grandchildren".

"While there is at least one exception, several authors have reported high rates of grade retention (23%-63%) and special-education placement (26%-28%) among custodial grandchildren" (Solomon & Marx, 1995:35, 386-394).

Children who are neglected or abused tend to struggle with low self-esteem and might challenge their grandparents in an effort to validate their own self-worth and the perception of sense of safety (Cox, 2008:6, 467-469). As a result of the behavioural problems mentioned above, it makes the transition for the grandparent even more demanding.

Many grandparents who take over the responsibility of parenting for the second time, need some skills in order to help them cope with the parenting role. They need to update their parenting skills, find information on current parenting practices, child development, childhood disorders such as depression, conduct disorder, self-mutilation and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). These grandparents might also be unfamiliar with issues such as drug abuse, sexually-transmitted diseases, gangs, school violence and peer pressure (Dolbin-MacNab, 2006:55, 564-575). In addition, these grandparents experience further stress from their grandchildren's school-related activities (Musil & Standing, 2005:60, 317-329; Rogers-Farmer, 1999:21, 377-388).

"By definition, one factor that plays a critical role in the context of all CGC (custodial grandchildren) is the temporary or permanent loss of a parent or parents. This adverse life-event challenges the coping resources of people of all ages. This can be especially traumatic for grandchildren. Given the frequency of additional stressful and traumatic experiences (e.g. abuse, custody battles) that the CGC commonly encounter, it is not surprising that a disproportionately high number of these children exhibit symptoms of emotional, behavioural and learning problems. To date, however, no longitudinal studies have

been done to determine if such symptoms are pre-existing (e.g. secondary to pre-natal drug exposure or parental abuse), relatively temporary reactions to the immediate crises, or psychopathology – precipitated by the crisis". (Brown, Harris & Bifulco, 1986:251-296)

The loss of an attachment relationship is widely recognized as one of the most painful emotional experiences any human being can endure (Brown et al., 1986:251-296; Parker, Barrett & Hickie, 1992:149, 877-885). The attachment theory of Bowlby (1969/1982 & 1973) explains that an attachment figure is the person to whom an infant has an inherent motivation to stay physically close to. When this person is absent, it causes psychological and emotional distress like sadness, anxiety and anger. A child forms an attachment – even when circumstances are poor – as, for example, when a child is being maltreated or abused. Therefore, the loss of any attachment figure is very agonising and also very significant.

According to Cassidy (1994:59, 228-249), as well as Dozier, Stoval and Albus, 1999:497-519),

"a child's attachment relationships with his caregiver can be categorized as secure, insecure or absent". "Secure attachment relationships result from sensitive and responsive parenting and are associated with a variety of positive outcomes in childhood and adulthood, such as effective emotional regulation, social competence and reduced risk for psychopathology".

"Insecure attachments are considered the product of insensitive, rejecting or inconsistent parenting and – particularly when studied in combination with other risk factors – are associated with a variety of negative outcomes in childhood, for instance, problematic peer relationships, symptoms of depression and aggression, mood liability and adulthood (e.g. anxiety and mental disorders and unstable romantic relationships". (Egeland & Sroufe, 1981:11, 77-9).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) emphasises that the ecological systems theory mentions that children exercise influence – and are influenced by direct or indirect environmental factors – in the areas in which they live. Of these environments, it is the family that is predominantly influenced.

There are a number of factors that are associated with grandchildren, which could influence the way they explore their relationships with their parents and now their grandparents. For example, the reason why grandchildren are being raised by their grandparents could be relevant, since children with a history of trauma may find it very difficult to form meaningful bonds with their grandparents (Bowlby, 1969 & 1982), or may be ambivalent about their parents (Crumbley & Little, 1997).

When a child is placed with his grandparents, *timing* is very significant. It is possible when a grandchild lives with his/her grandparents for a long time, he/she may develop a stronger bond with his/her grandparents. The frequency of contact that the child has with his parents may also affect the bonding of the child to the grandparents. A child may benefit from relationship-continuity and multiple parental figures, however, in some cases, a child experiences stress if these relationships are of poor quality (Crumbley & Little, 1997; Goodman, 2003; Goodman, 2007).

All these factors could be relevant to the manner in which a child navigates his family relationships; but, little research has been done to explore the characteristics of the unique perspective the grandchild has on his family.

Ghuman, Weist and Shafer, (1999:50, 1496-1498) found

"...that 22% of the 233 youths attending an inner-city community mental health centre for treatment of psychological difficulties, were cared for by grandparents".

These custodial grandchildren had been taken away from their parents because of neglect, abuse, or parental substance abuse. They were therefore at high risk of psychopathology, such as exposure to prenatal toxins, early childhood trauma, insufficient interaction with parents, family conflict, uncertainty about the future and societal stigma.

Studies of children who receive genuine kinship care – such as that done by Dubowitz, Feigelman, Zuravin, *et al.*, (1992:164, 603-610) – displayed further evidence of increased risk of psychological difficulties among custodial

grandchildren. These children have more emotional, behavioural and school-related problems than children in general.

2.6 PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES

2.6.1 Erikson's theory of psycho-social development

According to Erikson (1963) theory of psycho-social development, it seems that a grandparent could fit into either the *generativity versus* stagnation, or ego integrity *versus* the despair personality phase. Generativity is a longing to mentor the next generation to be more productive members of society (Habacon, 2006), by helping and guiding the next generation (Erickson, 1963).

When an adult lacks generativity, he/she becomes self-absorbed and tends to focus only on his own concerns, rather than trying to help others. According to Erickson's (1963) theory, grandparents may be more willing and motivated by generative concerns, and are willing to invest time, energy and resources towards helping their grandchild and secure his wellbeing.

Grandparents that have a generative interest can be exhausted by stress – which comes with the caring for their grandchild. They have a high risk of poverty and chronic concerns about everyday living and these factors can have a negative impact on their psychological reserves (Bachman & Chase-Lansdale, 2005:475-487; McAdams & Logan, 2004).

According to Erickson (1963), at the stage of *ego integrity versus despair*, a person might be in his senior years. At this stage, they tend to reflect or reminisce over their lives and what they have achieved. This stage brings with it a certain feeling of accomplishment, and they have then reached ego integrity. These grandparents have the experience, wisdom, time and even the financial stability to care for their grandchildren. In contrast, if these grandparents had failed to cope successfully with their life crises or challenges, they might have many regrets and could be experiencing despair.

2.6.2 Disengagement theory

According to Habacon (2006), the disengagement theory explains the concept that older adults are no longer active in society; they might even withdraw from previous engagements in society. The process happens gradually and is mutual between the older adult and society. Difficulties arise when grandparents who need to take care of their grandchildren experience disengagement; these adults have no more need for social support and struggle to develop the needed support when they have to raise their grandchildren.

Disengagement can lead to grandparents not seeking support to help them meet the needs of their grandchildren. They also withdraw and are reluctant to participate in school, community events or programmes such as parent-teachers meetings or support groups. In contrast, some of the 'disengaged' grandparents can continue connection and relationships with other individuals who might be in the same situation – to assist and support each other (Habacon, 2006).

2.6.3 Role theory

Most grandparents do not expect to repeat the parenting role when they become grandparents (Landry-Meyer & Newman, 2004:925, 1005-1025). The role theory explores the psychological and sociological effects on grandparents when they have to assume the parental role. The social role consists of role timing, role ambiguity and role conflict, as well as the experiences that such grandparents experience while raising their grandchildren.

2.6.4 Role timing

In society there are certain essential stages: people go to school; then graduate; follow a career and marry. Grandparents who are prepared to take over the parenting role for the second time are implicit willing to integrate new roles, such as the opportunity to instil in their grandchildren a sense of cultural beliefs and values. They decide to assume it, even if it is not in the natural timeframe for raising children. This creates situation that is out of sequence.

"Performing an off-time role indicates a divergence between personal behaviour and the structure of society" (Landry-Meyer & Newman, 2004:25, 1005-1025).

Parenting at a grandparent's age is not considered 'normal' within the expectation of traditional roles. Studies have shown that grandparents, who have to raise their grandchildren, experience a lack of qualification for the role of parenting and, at their age, it is incongruent with their retirement (Landry-Meyer & Newman, 2004:25, 1005-1025). Such grandparents feel trapped within their responsibility to take on the role to preserve history, family ties and cultural values (Landry-Meyer & Newman, 2004:25, 1005-1025).

Research conducted by Minkler and Roe (1993) show that:

"...off-time grandmothers were in their late 20s or 30s and the idea of entering grandparenthood early was not something they looked forward to. Some grandparents may express feelings of incongruence between roles linked from mid- to late adulthood and being a grandparent-caregiver".

Landry-Meyer and Newman (2004:1014) interviewed a participant who stated:

"I got cheated of my time that I was going to—this wonderful time. I had all these things planned that I was going to do, you know? So, sometimes I detect a little selfishness there, you know".

For many people, becoming a grandparent do not fit into their life cycle and it is not always a welcomed occurrence. The average age of a person becoming a grandparent is about 40-49 year of age (Landry-Meyer & Newman, 2004:25, 1005-1025). Because of this, most parents can't wait to enter into the '*empty nest*' stage of being free from the responsibilities of caring for a child.

2.6.5 Role ambiguity

When there is a lack of clear guidelines – or socially agreed-upon rules – for behaviour that is suited for a particular role, it is called role ambiguity (Landry-Meyer & Newman, 2004:25, 1005-1025). According to some studies, there are some ways that a grandparent's role can be defined (Silverstein & Marengo, 2001:22, 493-522). However, "*...there is not a monolithic role to follow for grandparents*" (Silverstein & Marengo, 2001:22, 493-522).

The lack of definition for the role of a grandparent makes it ambiguous and can result in an undefined role. In most 'natural' cases, a family consists of a biological father, biological mother and biological children. However, the grandparent-headed family structure is overlooked and is not recognised as a legitimate family structure (Landry-Meyer & Newman, 2004:25, 1005-1025). This lack of role definition further contributes to a grandparent's ambiguity concerning caregiving. Because of role ambiguity, grandparents have no legal responsibility for their grandchild, unless through a court order. According to Landry-Meyer and Newman (2004:25, 1005-1025), most grandparents lack the legal authority, or legal custody of their grandchild(ren).

Many grandparents assume the role as caregivers because the need arises, but they have to act fast. However, because of this, only a few of these grandparents seek legal advice; this can then intensify the ambiguity and make it very tough when the grandparents try to implement parental roles.

"Grandparents without legal authority typically face issues with school enrolment, medical care and social service provision" (Landry-Meyer, 1999:948, 381-389).

2.6.6 Role conflict

When an anticipated role differs from the actual enactment role, conflict may emerge in grandparents (Landry-Meyer & Newman, 2004:25, 1005-1025):

"The thought of raising children and becoming a traditional grandparent is generally a role that is anticipated".

One participant in Landry-Meyer and Newman's study illustrated the stereotyped role that grandparents have:

"I feel guilty for not feeling like a grandmother. The typical grandmother thoughts aren't what I have. I think I'm not being a good grandma. The kind that makes you feel good—like a big lap, smile, a bun on the back of your head" (Landry-Meyer & Newman, 2004:1019).

When grandparents need to become the parents to their grandchildren they are forced to let go of the traditional idea of grandparenting, and this is often met with conflicting thoughts. The grandparents might not only feel some grief over their inability to assume the parent role, but also some level of guilt because the grandchild is losing his parents *and* his grandparents – in the traditional sense. Likewise, Crumbley and Little (1997) affirm that grandparents may find it difficult to become the parent(s) and struggle to transform to being the provider, disciplinarian and authority figure. For such grandparents it is hard to accept that they cannot still be the traditional grandparent, but now have to take up the role as parent. It may seem like an easy duty, but this is a complete shift in what these grandparents are expecting – and what is now expected from them.

Further studies done by Landry-Meyer and Newman (2004:25, 1005-1025); and Stokes and Greenstone (1981:970, 691-701) reveal that a grandparent sometimes struggles to resist the desire to be an indulgent grandparent and sometimes finds it difficult to take up the role as a parent, having to lay down rules and be firm.

2.6.7 Attachment theory

In the late 1950s, John Bowlby (Bowlby, 1982) and Mary Ainsworth (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall, 1978) explored the attachment theory. Bowlby (1982) and Ainsworth, et al. (1978) sought to explore children's responses to loss – by investigating attachment through several disciplines, including neurophysiology, psychology and behavioural biology. In this regard, Poehlmann (2003:24, 149-173) suggests that these behavioural systems facilitate survival, for example: feeding, caregiving, attachment, exploration and social systems.

"In today's society, attachment is often linked to all relationships. The term 'attachment system' was originally referred to by Bowlby as 'the child's attachment to parent figures' and a 'caregiving system' as the parents' attachment to children". (Von Sydow, 2002:9, 77-90).

Von Sydow (2002:81) summarised the core concepts of attachment theory:

1. Attachment needs are inborn and is essential for all humans, of all ages.

2. Relationship experiences are internalized (as inner working models) and shape a person's personality.
3. Inner working models of attachment tend to remain stable, but can be changed through new relationship experiences.
4. Inner working models coin relationship behaviour. Humans tend to repeat inner attachment experiences in the relationships they have with their children and in love relationships.
5. Psychological health is closely related to a person's attachment security.

"Initial attachments are formed at birth. From 6 to 12 months, attachments are established, leading to security and trust. By 18 months, most children have identified more than one attachment figure, which may include a grandparent". (Poehlmann, 2003:149-173).

Self-identity, self-worth, as well as autonomy, are developed at about the age of three. At this time, a child's inner-working models are developed and the parent serves as a safe structure that a child can part from while exploring, learning and developing the skills he/she will need for self-protection and intimacy (Porter, 2003:60-70). When a caregiver is sensitive to the child's needs and takes care of the child with indispensable nurture and care, secure attachments are developed and the child can grow up to be a socially competent adult.

In addition, Poehlmann (2003:24, 49-173) emphasises that several changes occur regarding attachment when a grandparent becomes the primary caregiver for his grandchild. An attachment relationship develops between the grandparents and the grandchildren, and – in some instances – their past attachment relationship undergoes revision, as the grandparents have to accept the role of parents. On the other hand, disruptions in attachments may occur between grandchildren and their parents. Most family attachments that already exist, have to endure change as the situation has changed.

"Avoidant-insecure attachment behaviour is demonstrated when a child implies a dominance of exploration over attachment. A child can do tasks independently, but will not revert back to the caregiver for comfort in times of distress. The child may then hide his emotions from the caregiver – during times of distress – because the caregiver may be perceived as uncaring or rejecting, but not abusive". (Connor, 2006: 59, 172-184).

According to Conner (2006:59, 172-184), when a child has ambivalent-insecure attachments, he looks for attachment over exploration. Such a child lacks confidence and struggles to explore; he can be doubtful of the ability of his caregivers to provide the essential care for him. Common signs are extreme or prolonged hanging-on, exaggerated distress and resistance to comfort. A child who is confused shows disorganized or disoriented attachments; he might also show fear towards his caregiver, or show inconsistent attachment behaviour. He struggles to use the caregiver as a source of security or a platform for exploration.

Disorganized attachment is common in a child where there is abuse or fearsome behaviour. Conner (2006:59, 172-184) further emphasises that, for some of these children, the caregiver may be emotionally, physically or psychologically absent. In the light of the reasons mentioned above, a child who is abused by his parent(s) is taken away and placed with his grandparents, as some form of attachment may already exist between the grandparents and the grandchild. When the grandparents take up the role as caregivers for their grandchild there is always a disruption in the life of the child. This child is faced with the difficulties that arise with adjusting to a new environment and its rules. The younger the child, the easier the attachment and the change will be.

For an older child, forming an attachment with his grandparents is not always as easy. There are also other factors that need to be considered, such as age, previous and on-going relationships with his parents, the grandparents' state of mind, the grandparents' sensitivity, ability, as well as the preparedness of both parties to be considerate, and the willingness of the grandparents to understand the needs of the child.

2.6.8 Disorganized-insecure attachment

Main and Solomon (1986:95-124) contend that inconsistent behaviour on the part of parents might be a contributing factor in disorganized-insecure attachment. In additional research, Main and Hesse (1990:161-182) argue that – when parents elicit both *fear* and *reassurance* in a child – they contribute to a disorganized-attachment situation. This occurs because the child feels both comforted and frightened by the parent and that leads to confusing results.

2.7 CONCLUSION

Not so long ago, grandparents lived a life where they could spoil the next generation. They were able to be a part of their grandchildren's life in a very special and unique way – without having to assume the responsibilities that parents have. Grandparents played a very important role as providers of wisdom and advice. They had special bonds with their grandchildren and enjoyed being the narrators of many old folk tales and traditional stories. At those times, parents cared for their children, couples stayed married and were able to raise their children until they would leave the home and follow their own future.

However, these good times didn't last forever. Things started to go horribly wrong when social evils appeared on the horizon – and moved rapidly closer. People started taking and abusing all kinds of illegal substances, teenagers fell pregnant and, perhaps the most serious of all, parents got involved in crime. Children had to be removed from their parents – because of abuse or neglect.

When parents are not able to take care of their children – for whatever reason – their children are guided out of the home and placed in foster homes. For many grandparents this is their worst nightmare. They are forced to take over the parental role in order to protect and help their grandchildren.

However, this act of kindness doesn't come without a price. Becoming a parent for a second time is not without difficulty; the grandparents of these grandchildren are older and not all of them are as healthy as they were when they became parents the first time. Many of these grandparents are battling to make ends meet and they are not always financially equipped to care for their grandchildren.

Prolonged stress and burdens can have severe psychological effects on the grandparents that lead to feelings of despair, isolation and overall feelings of helplessness. Many grandparents struggle to make the shift from being the grandparent with a unique relationship of kindness, humour and carelessness, to becoming the firm parent that has to lay down rules and boundaries.

However, it is not only the grandparents who fall victim to the new world order; the grandchildren suffer as well. Most of these neglected children come from homes where their parents misuse drugs or alcohol, and this almost always leads to abuse or neglect of the child.

When a child is taken away from his parents he invariably feels abandoned and lost. Very few children have the psychological strength to cope with a new environment and new 'parents'. A lack of coping ability affects all areas of the grandchild's life and he struggles socially, mentally, academically as well as psychologically manifesting behavioural problems and struggling to fit into social settings.

Children build attachments from the day they are born. If their needs are met, they feel secure and the attachment is positive, helping the child to become a well-balanced young person. If a child suffers abuse or neglect, he tends to mistrust his attachments and finds it difficult to feel secure; he is reluctant to explore and develop a sense of belonging.

In most cases, when a child is taken away from his parents, he has to form new attachments. For a child in this situation, it is important for his grandparents to restore his attachments in order to feel secure and loved. Only when new positive attachments are formed, can a child start to trust and feel secure. This helps him to gain the ability to explore his surroundings, helping him to grow up being equipped to handle life's challenges. From the attachment theory it is clear that both the grandparents and the grandchild find it difficult to change or create a positive attachment.

Some grandparents find this new parenting role as a worthwhile and satisfying task. Such grandparents feel that it is an opportunity to be involved in their grandchild's life

in a unique way; they can instil values and old-fashioned morals into a society that has become very egocentric and inconsiderate. The positive attitude from the grandparents can be a constructive overall experience for both the grandparents, as well as the grandchild.

Most countries are setting up legal advice as well as support groups for affected families, where they can become involved and be assisted. Although this phenomenon is very common in South Africa, very little research has been done to look into the structures of these extended families and lend support and care to them.

After an intensive search through the literature, with reference to the psychological effects on both grandparents and grandchildren, it became clear that many other countries recognise the impact that the reconstructed – or extended – families have on society. The need arose to explore the situation in South Africa, with the view of identifying and supporting similar families to become well-balanced young adults.

CHAPTER 3

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the first two chapters, insights were presented into the problems and obstacles a child faces in a grandparent-headed household. The emphasis of the study rests strongly on the psychological effects such grandparent households have on grandchildren. Numerous studies have been done abroad on the emotional effects this situation have on the grandparents when they need to raise their grandchild(ren). Cox (2000:253-267) contends that grandparents are often thrown unwillingly into re-parenting – for which they are ill-prepared – leaving them feeling unsure and confused. For many of these grandparents this role is unplanned, ambiguous and ill-timed; they therefore succumb to it with considerable ambivalence (Landry-Meyer & Newman, 2004:1005-1025; Weber & Waldrop, 2000:33, 27-46).

Locally, no published research studies on this multifaceted theme could be found on either the grandparents or the grandchild. In the current research study it is aimed to explore and gain some understanding about the psychological effects on the grandchild when being raised by his grandparents, from a South African perspective.

As a research platform, several prominent literature sources are utilized as a basis to assist in the understanding of this intricate phenomenon, as well as the obstacles a child has to face and overcome in this predicament. Some examples are Hayslip and Kaminski (2005:45, 262-269) and Minkler, Fuller-Thomson, Miller and Driver (2000:207-220).

In Chapter 3, it is aimed to describe the rationale behind the empirical investigation that was used to explore the question about the psychological effects on the child – when being raised by grandparents.

The current research project can be described as a process to collect and analyze information, in an attempt to explore solutions to the research problem. Chapter 3's focus is on detailing the research methodology. In this regard, methodology refers to

the systematic methods used in the process of collecting information and data to investigate a specific research problem (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:6-9).

The present study's aim refers to the research design, methodology, selection of participants, duration of the study, the role of the researcher, as well as data collection and analyses. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:1-29), research methodology evaluates and processes specific methods which are applied to produce and acquire data and information that are reliable and valid.

Research methods are the actions applied to collect and analyze data in an objective way using various processes, for example: measurement techniques, observation, documents and interviews (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:1-29). In the research at hand, qualitative analyses were implemented.

3.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim with this current study is to explore the potential psychological effects on grandchildren – when they are being raised by their grandparents.

The psychological effects are categorized as:

- Socially
- Personally

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.3.1 Definition

According to Blanche et al., (2006:34), a research design can be described as a strategic framework that functions as a bridge between the research questions, execution and implementation. Sellitz et al., (1965:50) also assert that a research design guides the researcher in collecting and analyzing the data in a way that aims to combine relevance with the research purpose.

When methods are used, they have to result in accurate and reliable answers to the research question. The research design also supports in highlighting the limitations in the interventions, assists with the interpreting of the results, and specifies how the data should be evaluated (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:20-30).

3.3.2 Research paradigm

Generally, a research paradigm's purpose is to provide the essential structure to a study and it helps to determine which questions need to be asked and which methodology to be used.

The paradigm for the current research project can be described as an interpretive framework (paradigm) of the researcher's perspectives, beliefs and values about the surroundings, and how the effect on the child being raised by his grandparents can be studied and understood. In addition, Blanche et al., (2006:40) define a research paradigm as a perspective that helps provide a rationale to the researcher – and commits the researcher to a structured method for data collection.

In the present study, an anti-positivism paradigm was applied, which can be understood as a naturalistic inquiry into human reality and behaviour (Cohen et al., 2002:19-20). This approach acknowledges that reality is subjective and multi-layered, and that there can be many explanations for social reality (Cohen et al., 2000:17-20). An anti-positivist paradigm emphasises human interactions and suggests a qualitative approach to the research source. Accordingly, this study will implement a qualitative research design.

3.3.3 Qualitative approach

Blanche et al., (2006:47-48, 76-77) describe a qualitative research method as a technique to help gather data and analyze information. It relies on verbal, rather than mathematical statistical analyses. The method is oriented and based on detailed descriptions of what is being observed in a certain context. The process can also be seen as systematic and it can emphasize naturally occurring phenomena.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:320-325), qualitative research has to occur in a natural setting, because it accentuates behaviour as it spontaneously occurs. This helps to form a better understanding of the situational context, which is essential, since it is context-sensitive. The researcher also has direct interaction with the research situation and the participants in order to collect the data directly.

In the case of data being analyzed and synthesized in order to generate themes about the research topic, inductive reasoning is applied (Mouly, 1978). When

qualitative research is done, the researcher has to be concerned about the qualities, perspectives and characteristics of the participants in a specific context (Blanche et al., 2006:47-48, 76-77).

In addition, McMillan and Schumacher (2010:323) mention that qualitative research is flexible, therefore the design can change as the study progresses and more information becomes available. However, when doing qualitative research it is important for the researcher to remain objective and without preconceptions. This will help the researcher to pay attention to the participants' meanings, experiences and insights into their social situations and behaviour. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:395-392), qualitative research produces descriptions of people's thoughts, actions, beliefs and perceptions. Its main concern is to understand phenomena – from the participants' perspective.

For the study at hand, interactive case studies were prearranged in order to gain information and provide an understanding of the psychological effects on grandchildren, when raised by their grandparents. Case studies are mostly descriptive in nature and aim to provide in-depth descriptions and insights into a person's situation (Blanche et al., 2006:140-461). The current research is grounded on a theoretical approach and makes use of multiple data sources, originating in the context-setting, for making analytical deductions. The real strengths of case studies lie in a high construct validity, in-depth insights and the establishment of rapport with the research participants.

What is more, according to Nisbet and Watt (1984:72), a case study is a specific example that occurs commonly to illustrate a general principle; it is an instance of action. Case studies have the ability to penetrate instances that would not have been possible with quantitative research. In case studies the researcher can gain an immediate understanding of cause-and-effect (Cohen et al., 2002:181).

3.4 RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN

3.4.1 Site selection and sampling

3.4.1.1 Site selection

Site selection involves selecting a location according to certain criteria, which is best suited for interviews with the participants, and is suitable for a particular study and research design (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:326-327). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:351), the site should suit the study design and also be practical in terms of the researcher's resources, time, mobility and skills.

For the current study, a site was identified that complies with the above-mentioned criteria – an public school situated in the Gauteng Province of South Africa. The particular school had no particular value for the research design – it was merely a venue where the families could easily get together at a central location – a convenient location to suit the research design.

3.4.1.2 Sampling

Sampling in research can be defined a process whereby subjects, or participants, are selected by means of certain criteria, such as age, are chosen from a defined population to participate in a study.

For the present study, the population was grandchildren who were being raised by their grandparents. The researcher aimed to find participants who would yield the information that was needed to study the research question. Purposeful sampling was applied. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:138) define purposeful sampling as:

"...the researcher intentionally selecting particular features or a certain population that may act as representatives of the topic being studied."

For the research study at hand, five families were selected as case studies. Detailed accounts and analyses of the data were scrutinized to gain knowledge and understanding of the psychological effects that occurs in grandchildren when they enter the new, altered family system. The participants were specifically chosen for their ability to provide useful information and insight.

The criteria for selection of the grandchildren included the following:

- They had been raised by their grandparents since they had been removed from their parents, because of crime-related reasons and/or substance and alcohol abuse.
- They had to be between 7 and 17 years of age
- They had not been undergoing other forms of psychotherapy at the time, which could jeopardise the study's reliability.

The sample consisted of three boys and four girls.

3.4.1.3 Logistics

At the school, the initial interviews – as well as psychotherapy sessions – were held in a suitable classroom. Some sessions were done on an individual basis and others in groups². The group sessions were facilitated by the researcher in two sessions, in the afternoons, lasting 45 minutes to an hour. There were two group sessions for the grandchildren, where they were allowed to talk to one another, as well as with the researcher, about their experiences. There were also two individual sessions for each grandchild that were done in their respective homes.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

The data collection of a research study depends mainly on the research problem. Data collection – in the qualitative research applied in the present study – helped the researcher understand the feelings and emotions the grandchildren had experienced while they were living with their grandparents. Qualitative studies generally require multiple methods of data collection (triangulation) and validation, in order to provide in-depth information about the research question(s). According to Cohen et al., (2002:112), triangulation is a technique where more than one method of data collection is used in a study. Campbell and Fiske (1959) also mention that triangulation is a very powerful method to demonstrate concurrent validity, especially in qualitative research.

Referring to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:319-341), the methods used in qualitative research usually have the following characteristics:

² The group discussions were not included in the final research design due to the fact that the CSC refused permission to the researcher to perform these sessions. The CSC were of opinion that these group sessions would not be in the children's best interest at the time.

- The techniques are less structured and more open-ended with specific protocols and answers.
- Researchers may choose to change the strategies of collecting data as the research progresses, by adding, refining or avoiding certain techniques – or participants – in order to comply with the aim of the study.
- The procedure tends to be more interactive and the researcher connects more closely to the participants and subject matter. This enables the researcher to get a better understanding, build rapport, and enhance the reliability of the data.
- Triangulation is used in order to increase the reliability of the data.
- The research findings are not commonly used to generalise the results to a specific population. Each participant may be seen as a small portion of evidence that strives to find general patterns among various studies about the same topics/issue.

For the study at hand, the following data collection methods were applied: semi-structured, one-to-one and group interviews; open-ended questions; projective media; observations and field notes; documents and artifact collection.

Observation and field notes were applied throughout the above-mentioned sessions. The responses were then examined before the commencement of the next session.

- Session 1: Group discussions – grandchildren, using open-ended questions
- Sessions 2-6: Individual sessions – with each grandchild, using projective media
- Sessions 7 and 9: Follow-up group discussions – with the grandchildren

3.5.1 Interviews

Interviews are generally used to collect data by asking questions and noting the subjects' responses (Blanche et al., 2006:297-300). Moreover, interviews are usually conducted face-to-face. This technique enables the interviewer to collect information from what the interviewee is saying. It is important to pay attention to the *manner* the

interviewees convey the information, and *how* they present themselves during the entire process.

When one does qualitative research, it is important that the interviewer has the ability to distinguish between the content and the process of the person being interviewed.

The researcher can steer the interviewee in a new direction, leading to further action to be taken, and perhaps provide a new route towards where the research is moving. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:355-361), what is mentioned above is particularly useful as it helps to access the depth of information, and this may then elicit responses which would otherwise not have been voiced. Blanche et al., (2006:297-300) continues to say that the interviewer attempts to create a positive climate to ensure that the interviewee feels accepted and understood.

In the present study the interviewer used semi-structured interviews. This type of interview is commonly used in qualitative research and is helpful, because it is more flexible than formal interviews. Semi-structured interviews are characterized by a fluid structure in which the interviewer does not follow a formal list of questions, but rather two-way communication.

The purpose with an interview can be explained by the following (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002:268) :

- it helps to evaluate a person
- to gain insight into an employee for selection or promotion
- to help in therapy when used in psychiatric interviews
- to test a hypothesis
- a method to gain information and data needed for research purposes
- to sample participants

According to Venter (2008), there are specific guidelines when using questions in an interview:

Only ask questions if necessary. The participant feels more in control if he feels he is the one that is structuring the interview. Asking open-ended questions will avoid questions where the interviewee can only answer "yes" or "no". When some questions arise and gaps form it is necessary to probe deeper, but when the interviewee feels uncomfortable do not force. Avoid offensive questioning.

Open-ended questions are asked in order to gain detailed information on the participants' experience, behaviour, opinions, values, feelings, knowledge, sensory perceptions and background.

3.5.2 Projective media

Projective techniques are often used in therapy as a means to gain more insight into the clients' unconscious needs, emotions and thoughts, which are often protected by various defense mechanisms. According to Venter (2008), projection is one of the defence mechanisms which was first coined by Sigmund Freud – he formulated these mechanisms in psychoanalytical theory. It usually occurs when a person tries to protect himself from something that causes harm. People tend to project their feelings and emotions toward other things or people.

3.5.2.1 DAP (Draw a Person)

A projective drawing technique that is often used with children, is the *Draw-A-Person*. It is also referred to as the *Human Figure Drawing Method* (HFD; Koppitz, 1968). In the early years of the 20th century, several studies were done that focussed on the connection between children's figure drawings and cognitive development (Kamphaus & Pleiss, 1991:29, 395-401).

Various studies have found that deductions – made from figure-drawing tests – show developmental progression (Adler, 1970:35, 52-57; Brown, 1990:279-288; Aikman, Belter & Finch, 1992:114-120). Groves and Fried (1991:140-148) also suggest that there is developmental significance in the items that arise from drawings. Additionally, Mehryar, Tashakori, Yousefi & Khajavi (1987:401-406) found that test scores increased substantially with age, and that the *Draw-a-Person* test is a good predictor of educational achievement.

According to Koppitz (1968), children's drawings of human figures and of abstract designs have been used to infer relationships with personality or emotional variables. She also gives developmental criteria and norms for 'emotional indicators' in figure drawings. Her research suggests that the presence of two or more emotional indicators in a human figure drawing, is related to emotional disorder in children, for example, attachment disorder, conduct disorder, anxiety and suicidal tendencies.

3.5.2.2 KFD (*Kinetic Family Drawing*)

From the early 20th century, projection techniques have commonly been used in the psychological assessment of children and adults. This test has been used to help therapists measure unconsciously or consciously suppressed emotional experiences. Nowadays, therapists also use the *KFD* to gain an understanding of cognitive processing (Meichenbaum, 1977).

This test is, in some ways, similar to the *Draw a Person* method – except that the client is asked not just to draw a person – but his whole family. The family needs to be actively doing something. The test helps to measure the child's perception of the interpersonal relationships in the family (Burns & Kaufman, 1972).

The KFD has widely been used among psychologists to help with their evaluation of children, because of the recognition of the importance of family dynamics. It provides an understanding into ethology and helps the therapist to gain more insight into how to treat emotional disorders in children (Reynolds, 1978:15, 489-492).

3.5.2.3 TAT (*Thematic Apperception Test*)

The *Thematic Apperception Test* is a projective medium that helps the therapist to evaluate a person's patterns of thinking, his attitudes and observational capacity. It also measures emotional responses to ambiguous material. The test consists of a set of cards that portray human figures in a variety of situations (Venter, 2008).

3.5.2.4 CAT (*Children's Apperception Test*)

In the *Children's Apperception Test*, the child is given an individually-administered projective personality test, appropriate for his age. This test is intended to measure personality traits, psychodynamics and attitude processes in young children. The

child is presented with a series of pictures and asked to tell a story about what he is seeing in the pictures.

3.5.2.5 *Island*

The island is an informal technique to help the researcher understand the participant's relationships with family members and people in their lives. This technique is not standardised but an informal way to better understand the participant.

3.5.3 Observations and field notes

Lofland (1971) gives a number of useful suggestions about collecting field notes:

- It is important to record observations as quickly as possible because, when time passes, valuable information is forgotten
- Write notes rapidly
- Writing has the ability to stimulate thoughts
- Typing field notes is better than writing, as one might need more than one copy
- It is better to make more than one copy of the field notes. At least one master copy needs to be kept for referencing
- The notes must be adequate enough to be used and understood long after the research has been completed

When observing a subject's natural behaviour, reactions and non-verbal cues, the researcher is able to gain access to comprehensive information (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:350). Throughout the research process, observations have to be made continuously. When observing, anything that can prove to be significant, and can lead to deeper understanding, has to be observed and noted. Recorded field notes of what was seen and heard will be analyzed and used to reflect on the process.

3.5.4 Documents and artefact collection

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:360-362) maintain that document- and artifact collection involves a non-interactive method of collecting information. The researcher does not extract the evidence – but analyze it – to come to certain conclusions. Any object or document that can help the researcher to better understand the participants – and shed light on the research questions – are seen as artifacts.

Documents are classified into official or personal documents, both of which were utilized in the present study:

- Official documents are formal papers mainly used for external communication. Institutions keep individual records of each individual – it may be used to gain additional background, or demographic data – from a different perspective.
- Personal documents include papers that describe the individual's thoughts, feelings and experiences. They may include diaries, journals, letters, drawings or other documents that may surface during the research process. They may enable the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the individual, his life-world and perceptions.

Any official document may be useful for research. Personal files of the participants, as well as additional information from teachers and therapists can be used to gain deeper insight into the psychological effects on the subjects.

However, ethical considerations have to be considered when using personal files or documents and the consent of the participants has to be obtained.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In a qualitative research study, consensus is sought by triangulation; different data collection strategies and various sources are used in order to lead to trustworthy and reliable interpretations (Cohen et al., 2000:112-113). In a research process, the assessment of whether the information is meaningful, will impact on the reliability of the data. As avowed by Blanche et al., (2006:47-48, 76-77), the purpose of

qualitative research is not so much to reach an explanation and meaning, but rather to reach understanding.

In the current study, the researcher started with specific data and tried to make sense from it. She ultimately ended with findings. This is known as an inductive process of organising data. The main tools of a researcher is to observe, interview and collect data from participants, in order to identify, describe and understand different patterns that may arise.

Inductive data analyses from various sources allow for general themes and conclusions that emerge from the collected data (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010:377-390).

In the present research, the researcher performed content analysis, and the results from this, influenced some of the strategies used in the data collection. The data were analysed and the results interpreted, in order to attempt the answering of the specific research questions of this study namely:

What is the psychological effect on the grandchildren, referring to:

- social well-being?
- psychological well-being?

Each data collection strategy was analysed as follows:

3.6.1 Interviews

In the interviews, the responses from the questionnaire and the verbal and non-verbal reactions of the participants were analysed – in order to identify the participants' current affective, cognitive and behavioural state.

3.6.2 DAP

The '*Draw a Person*' results of each participant were analysed according to the criteria set in Wakefield and Underwager (1998). According to Wakefield and Underwager (1998), distress and trauma is reflected in drawings that include such signs as large heads, large empty eyes, abundant hair, shaded clouds, knotholes in trees, large hands, large pointed teeth, abnormally tiny eyes, eyes without pupils,

crossed eyes, excessive details, box-shaped bodies, poorly integrated body parts, lack of gender differentiation, hair that is long at the sides or thinning at the crown, wedge-shaped windows, extraneous circles and large smoke trails coming from a chimney (Wakefield and Underwager, 1998:175-195). However, it serves only as a guide, since nothing is standardised – or definite – about the projective drawings and the participant's comments and explanations.

3.6.3 Observations and field notes

These were analysed in order to identify particular themes stemming from the psychotherapy sessions.

3.6.4 Document and artefact collection

Official documents were analysed in order to obtain additional background information about each participant. Personal documents and artefacts were also analysed to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants and their psychological functioning.

In Chapter 4, the data are displayed in a logical, concise manner from which conclusions can be drawn – with the intention of gaining a unique understanding of the themes and questions of the study.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Qualitative research tends to be more personal than quantitative. Because of the personal factors involved, it is important to ensure that ethical guidelines are considered – to protect the participants from any form of harm.

According to McMillian and Schumacher (2010:338-340), the following ethical considerations have to be taken into account during the entire empirical process:

- ***Informed consent and assent as dialogue:*** Informed consent has to be obtained from the institute, as well as all the participants in the study. The purpose, procedures and expectations have to be discussed thoroughly, as well as any potential risks. The participant or head of each institute has to be invited to ask questions. All queries have to be addressed (McMillian *et al.*,

2010:339). Prior to the empirical study, the researcher has to gain consent from the principal of the school involved.

Consent also has to be obtained from the participants' parents or guardians (*cf.* Addendum 4) and assent from the participants (*cf.* Addendum 4) themselves. During the dialogue, everybody involved will be informed of the following aspects:

- The purpose and procedures of the study, including the logistical settings and time frames. It also includes relevant details about the researcher, the study's supervisor and the research institute.
 - The participants can withdraw from the study at any time.
 - Their rights – as research subjects – which include the assurance that they will remain anonymous and all data will be handled with confidentiality.
 - Any possible risks or discomforts that may occur during the sessions, for instance becoming distressed while talking about their situations.
- ***Confidentiality and anonymity:*** When doing the research, a researcher has to ensure that the confidentiality of the participants is the first priority – disguising names, locations of the participants, as well as the site. It is the researcher's duty to protect the participants' confidentiality from others in the same setting, as well as from the general reading public (McMillian et al., 2010:339).
 - ***Privacy and empowerment:*** Involve all the participants in all aspects of the research to establish trust. This will help them not feeling betrayed by the findings. The aim is to give all participants a sense of empowerment as they realize 'they' have control over the process and problem-solving in each session (McMillian et al., 2010:339).
 - ***Caring, fairness and protection:*** A sense of caring and fairness must form part of the researcher's thought patterns and actions (McMillian et al., 2010:339). When doing the study, it is possible that some of the participants may become emotional, or feel tense about a certain topic. The researcher

has to handle this in a professional and compassionate manner. The researcher has to ensure that every participant will be protected from any harm during the entire research process.

- ***Credibility and transferability:*** The researcher's confidence in the findings – as determined by the research design and methods – will contribute to the credibility of the study. The findings must contain accurate information about the experiences, themes and topics that are studied.

3.8 CONCLUSION

In Chapter 3, an outline of the process of the study was presented as well as where the researcher aimed to focus during the research process. It included the research design and the case studies. The selection of the locations (sites), sampling procedures and data collection techniques were discussed. The interpretation of the data was discussed, in order to provide the reader with a clear framework on how the researcher followed the research steps. The chapter also underlined the importance of the ethical guidelines that need to be considered when conducting research.

In Chapter 4, the findings of the study are presented and deliberated.

CHAPTER 4

4 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim with the current research study was to investigate the psychological effects on the grandchildren – when they are being raised by their grandparents.

In Chapter 4 the results of the project are presented. The aim with the collected data is discussed in terms of the research question.

4.2 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For the present research project, seven children from four families were selected as participants for the qualitative study. The families were selected through the **CSC** (Christian Social Council) according to the selection criteria discussed Chapter 3. The data resulting from the interviews with the seven grandchildren were supplemented by additional information from the informal interviews, observations, applications and analyses of the standardised research media.

The convenience sample consisted of three boys and four girls – selected because they matched the selection criteria, namely, they were grandchildren who were being raised by their grandparents and were without their own parents – who had either left or passed away.

The researcher – as primary executive of data collection and analysis – needed to identify participants that could yield rich data concerning their social and emotional experiences.

Children ³	Girls	Boys	Age in years
Cayla	x		15
Chiree	x		13
Lethaba		x	8
Mpholo		x	14
Nicoleen	x		11
Talista	x		14
Thabo		x	8

TABLE 1 Distribution of the sample by gender and age

4.2.1 Participant 1: NICOLEEN

4.2.1.1 *Background*

Nicoleen's parents were never married and they had separated while she was still a young girl. She then switched between living with her mother and her maternal grandmother. Nicoleen enjoyed her time with her grandmother and felt safe and secure. One day her mother came to fetch her and she had to leave. The mother re-married and the new stepfather struggled to accept Nicoleen. At another time, her mother called her paternal grandmother and asked to take Nicoleen to live with her and her husband.

Her paternal grandmother went to fetch Nicoleen to come and live with them. While living there with the paternal grandmother and her husband, the mother never tried to see or communicate with Nicoleen. Nicoleen's father, at that time, came to fetch her to live with him. For a while it went well, but her father started dating a lady that struggled to accept Nicoleen. Some of the neighbours called her paternal grandmother telling her that things were not going well with Nicoleen and they should be concerned.

³ For confidentiality reasons, the children's names were changed

Nicoleen stayed with her father for a while after the call. A few weeks on, her paternal grandmother received yet another call from the neighbours that were concerned about how the father's girlfriend was treating Nicoleen. The grandmother and her husband then went to fetch Nicoleen to live with them, where she has been staying since she was in Grade 1. They are not related to her, but have full custody. During the time of the interview, she was still in her grandparents' custody. They thought that her father was very relieved when they came to fetch Nicoleen and he did not protest in any way.

According to her paternal grandmother, Nicoleen had suffered neglect and received little nurturing from either her mother or father. Basic hygiene and manners had been neglected when she started living with them. Her grandmother admits that in the beginning they were too embarrassed to take her out for dinner because of her poor table manners.

Recently, her grandmother started struggling with Nicoleen. She is currently in Grade 4 and is becoming increasingly hard to discipline. She is failing at school and lacks motivation to do her homework or schoolwork in class. Her grandmother feels she is not able to handle Nicoleen any longer and that she (Nicoleen) needs to go to her father, because they are tired of, and struggling with her. The atmosphere at home is filled with conflict and every day is a struggle to remain out of a continuous argument.

Nicoleen's father has recently married another lady that has a child of her own. Nicoleen has visited them and she and the lady get along very well. Currently her father is trying to get his matters in order so that Nicoleen can come and live with them.

The CSC is allowing the father holiday visits to see whether the situation is in Nicoleen's the best interest. She is going on an extended vacation in December 2013 to spend time with her father. However, her paternal grandmother and her husband are still her legal custodians – until the CSC are completely assured that her father can take proper care her.

4.2.1.2 Observations during the interview

Nicoleen is a shy and reserved teenager. She struggled to form a relationship with the researcher and came across as anxious and sceptical. She showed the researcher a stuffed elephant that her aunt (which she mentioned that she loved very dearly) gave her. During the whole session she anxiously held on to the elephant and mentioned several times that the elephant is her only friend at home that she talks to it when she is sad. She mentions that she does not like the fact that her paternal grandmother keeps telling everyone about her situation – that it makes her sad.

4.2.1.3 Findings from the projection media

DAP (Draw A Person)

Nicoleen chose to draw her best friend and put considerable emphasis on her longing for her best friend. She mentions that her *DAP* friend "... *is alone when she is not with her friend and that when she is not with Annelize she would not be able to help her*". She also mentions her fear of the dark and the bully at school. "*Annelize is afraid of the dark just like me*".

Themes

The *DAP* projection test yielded the following main themes:

- the importance of friendships
- fear of the dark and the unknown

KFD (Kinetic Family Drawing)

In the *KFD* test Nicoleen mentions that she is discontent most of the time, but sometimes happy. The only time she is happy at home is when she is with her stuffed elephant. She mentions that her paternal grandmother is mostly angry, but can be friendly at times. She showed no attachment with her paternal grandmother or her husband and, referring to her in the *KFD* projections: "...*she feels that she is only visiting them*". There appears to be a lot of conflict between Nicoleen and her paternal grandmother.

Themes

The *KFD* projection test yielded the following main themes:

- conflict
- attachment disorder
- abandonment

Island

Nicoleen's *Island* projection shows that she has a strong bond with her best friend and her stuffed elephant. There seems to be little or no attachment towards her parents or her paternal grandmother and her husband. Nicoleen seems to have a negative relationship with her paternal grandfather and mentions that he does not like her and had slapped her through the face when she was younger.

Themes

The *Island* test produced the following main themes:

- disorganized-insecure attachment
- conflict in social settings and in the family

TAT (Thematic Apperception Test)

In Nicoleen's projection she shows feelings of helplessness. Nicoleen mentions that: *"He is struggling and no one can help him"*. She feels rejected by her parents and that they don't care about her; again she points out that: *"...the girl is sad because her mother does not care about her and her father took away her horse that he knows she needs"*.

Nicoleen feels that she is on her own and needs to help herself if she wants to get better. Nicoleen says: *"Her mother has nothing to do with her homework and she decided to work on her own to make her grades better"*.

Considerable problems and conflict arose from the projection test and it seems that Nicoleen feels that she is always in trouble at home or at school. She mentions this a number of times during the test.

"...the man and woman is fighting"

"...man wants to hurt the woman"

...mother and daughter fights"

Nicoleen feels rejection and abandonment, and in most of her *Thematic Apperception Test* projections – the man either leaves or he dies. In some instances the mother does something that causes the husband to leave. It seems that Nicoleen has a low self-esteem and wonders if she will ever be good enough for someone to love her. In Nicoleen's words: *"(the) woman is sitting on the porch and wondering if she will ever be good enough that someone will like her"*.

Themes

The *TAT* projection test yielded the following main themes:

- helplessness
- parents that don't care about her
- she has to rely on herself
- sadness
- negative feelings towards herself
- negative relationship with parents
- unnatural outlook on relationships
- conflict
- abuse
- abandonment
- rejection
- death

Incomplete sentences

Nicoleen is struggling academically at school. She is also experiencing problems of being bullied. She tends to be sad at school because of her conflict with friends. Nicoleen sees her friends as the most important thing in her life and the idea of leaving her friends to go and live with her father is causing stress and sadness. Nicoleen says: *"I wonder if my friend will recognize me when I am 16 years old"*.

She has a stuffed elephant that she has an obsession with. Most of her longings are towards her stuffed elephant. She mentions a fear for the dark and an overall feeling of apprehension that she is unable to explain. She mentions that she is sad most of

the time. Nicoleen misses her parents and wishes to be with them. Currently there is considerable conflict between Nicoleen and her paternal grandmother that also adds to Nicoleen's sadness and stress.

Themes

The *Incomplete Sentences* generated following main themes:

- importance of social support
- obsessive behaviour in relation to personal possessions
- struggling academically
- fear of the dark and the unknown
- longing for parents
- sadness
- overall fearfulness
- conflict in social settings and at home

4.2.1.4 Sub-conclusion and common themes: Nicoleen

There were a few themes that kept on recurring throughout the various projection tests, as well as the general discussion. In her projections she portrayed feelings of fear, sadness, abandonment and rejection. She also experienced conflict and disorganized-insecure attachment difficulties.

4.2.2 Participant 2: Chiree

4.2.2.1 Background

Chiree's parents died in a motor vehicle accident during which all the children were present. Chiree is the middle child of three girls. She and her two sisters are now living with their paternal grandfather. When the parents died, a Trust was created for the children and this Trust's money is leading to all kinds of family problems. According to her paternal grandfather and paternal uncle, all the grandparents wanted to raise the children – for the sake of having access to the Trust funds. The maternal grandparents (who have no relationship with the girls) went to court to gain custody of the children, but the court decided that it would be in the best interest of the children to stay with their paternal grandfather. According to him, it is very difficult for a single person – none the less a *single* grandfather – to get custody of the three girls.

According to the court's ruling, the following items were considered as relevant for the decision to grant full custody to the paternal grandfather:

- the children would stay in their present school
- they would live in the same area and keep their friends
- the father has two brothers whose children are approximately the same age as the grandchildren and the family is very close

The paternal extended family structure provides a decent structure and support for the grandchildren. They are all involved in raising the grandchildren and the family is very close, spending considerable time together. They often all go out together to the movies or do activities in the park. The paternal grandfather loves the grandchildren very much and will do anything for them. The children appear happy and content, considering the unfortunate death of their parents.

4.2.2.2 Observations during the interview

Before the present study began, Chiree was busy studying for her exams – a month before the exams were due to start. Chiree says that: "*I want to get a head start in the exams, because my schoolwork is very important to me*". She mentions that she loves to study and enjoys school. Chiree is a friendly young girl that easily formed a relationship with the researcher. She spoke with confidence without any reservations. She seemed content and relaxed and to enjoy the session.

4.2.2.3 Findings from the projection media

DAP (Draw A Person)

The person in Chiree's drawing puts a considerable amount of faith in her relationships with friends. She mentions that her person (drawing) is afraid of the dark and the unknown.

Themes

The *Draw a Person* projection test yielded the following main themes:

- fear of the dark and the unknown
- the importance of friends

KFD (Kinetic Family Drawing)

Chiree's *KFD* drawing indicates that she has a good family support structure and feels secure and happy in her family.

Themes

The *KFD* projection test generated the following main theme:

- happiness

Island

Chiree's *Island* projection indicates that she has a very close relationship with the members of her family, as well as her paternal grandfather. She enjoys spending time with them and feels loved and secure.

Themes

The *Island Projection Test* produced the following main themes:

- happiness
- good relationships

TAT (Thematic Apperception Test)

In the projection Chiree presented feelings of sadness and fear. She mentions that: *"...the woman is standing at the door; she is crying because she misses someone"*. It seems that she feels alone at times and attaches herself to friends and family. She mentions that: *"There is someone that will help her, someone like her friends, and I think they like each other; they are friends"*.

She has a deep fear of her grandfather dying. She says that: *"(The) Man is standing at a grave because his grandmother and grandfather died"*. She also mentioned that: *"I am afraid of my grandfather dying"*.

It appears that Chiree has a distorted view of relationships. It became clear from a number of statements she has made in the TAT projections:

"The man is looking at other women; he leaves his wife to be with the other lady".

"The lady catches another lady in her bedroom; her husband is leaving her for the other woman".

In her projections there are numerous times where the people look happy and then one of them decides to leave – and pain and sadness follows.

"The wife is hiding something from her husband; she does not want to be with him anymore".

"She leaves him for another man and the husband is sad and afraid".

It appears that Chiree experiences feelings of fear, but not the insight into *why*.

In her projection, there is also a feeling of being alone and the sadness that comes along with it.

"The man feels sad, he is wondering why he must be all alone".

Chiree shows a longing for her parents and wonder how they are. She says that:
"...the man is sitting in the dark and looks up in heaven and wonder what it is like. He believes one day he will go to heaven and be able to see them again."

Themes

The *Thematic Apperception Test* exposed the following main themes:

- sadness
- longing for her parents
- importance of friends
- unhappiness
- fear
- feelings of aloneness
- fear of grandfather dying

Incomplete sentences

Chiree's *Incomplete Sentences* revealed a fear of the unknown. She affirms the following:

"I am afraid of thieves in the night".

"I become sad when someone frightens me."

She misses her parents very much and wishes to see them again. She mentions that: *"I wonder if I will ever see my parents again" and "I wish I could have my parents back"*.

Some sibling conflict arises occasionally in the family. She sometimes blames herself for not doing more for her parents while they were still alive. She admits that: *"...I am sorry for all the things I didn't do for my parents"*.

Themes

The *Incomplete Sentences* generated the following main themes:

- fear of the unknown
- longing for parents
- conflict
- blame

4.2.2.4 Sub-conclusion and common themes: Chiree

There were a few themes that kept recurring throughout the various projection tests, as well as in the general discussion. Chiree experiences feelings of fear and a longing for her parents. She also sees her friends as her most important support system.

4.2.3 Participant 3: TALISTA

4.2.3.1 Background

Talista is the older sister of Chiree (participant 2 – mentioned above). They share the same background.

4.2.3.2 Observations during the assessment

Talista was chosen for the school's cricket team and on our appointment day she had to play a cricket match. She came late and was tired. The researcher asked her if she wanted to re-schedule, but she said 'no' and wanted to start with the interview.

The assessment took place in her bedroom, which she shares with her youngest sister. She came across as calm and collected and was very friendly. She quickly formed a relationship with the researcher and spoke freely.

4.2.3.3 Findings from projection media

DAP (Draw A Person)

Talista's *DAP* showed that she is afraid of the dark and the unknown. In informal discussions during the *DAP* she said that she is always busy and try not to think too much about what happened to her parents. She tends to feel lonely, but then listens to music and keep herself busy.

Themes

The *Draw a Person* test yielded the following main themes:

- loneliness
- fear of the dark and the unknown
- denial

KFD (Kinetic Family Drawing)

Talista's *KFD* drawing indicated that she has a good family support structure and feels secure and content in her family.

Themes

The *KFD* projection test exposed the following main themes:

- happiness
- security

Island

Talista has a good relationship with her cousin. She tends to withdraw from her family and rather be with her cousin or friends.

Themes

The *Island Projection Test* revealed the following main themes:

- relates more easily to people of her own age group
- attachment disorder
- withdrawal
- importance of friends

TAT (Thematic Apperception Test)

It appears that Talista is struggling academically. She mentions in her projections that the boy: *"...wants to learn but he is struggling, he does not understand"* and *"...someone tries to help him but he is still struggling"*. She sometimes feels despondent about her inability to succeed, no matter how hard she tries. She said, *"...she does not understand why she does not understand"*. She sometimes feels like running away from things that she can't do.

The *TAT* indicates that she tends to feel alone and disorganised, but when that happens, she keeps herself busy with numerous activities, so she doesn't have to think about it. She also mentions that: *"...the woman wants to do her work and when she has a lot of work she does not feel so alone"*. The *TAT* highlighted the fact that there seems to be some sibling conflict.

Talista is afraid of the dark and the unknown. In her projections she tends to use the words: *"I am confused", "I don't understand"* and *"he or she is afraid of something"*.

Themes

The *TAT* projection test disclosed the following main themes:

- she struggles scholastically
- despondency
- importance of friends
- importance of family
- running away
- conflict
- loneliness
- disorganized
- fear of the dark and the unknown

Incomplete sentences

For Talista it is very important to spend time with her family. She *writes: "I like it a lot when I spend time with my family"*. She has fears that she is not able to explain. She says that: *"I am afraid of things that don't exist that will come for me one day"*. She sometimes becomes angry, but shows no insight into *why* she gets angry. She discloses that: *"I am sorry that I sometimes get angry for no reason"*. She also mentions that it happens frequently. She tends to spend a lot of time trying to make others happy. She says that she *"...suffers from trying to make other people happy"*.

Themes

The *Incomplete Sentences* showed the following main themes:

- importance of family
- unknown fears
- longing for parents
- afraid of hurting people

4.2.3.4 Sub-conclusion and common themes: Chiree

There were a few themes that kept recurring throughout the various projection tests, as well as in the general discussion. Talista shows feelings of fear and loneliness. She also shows a longing for her parents and finds her support in her friends.

4.2.4 Participant 4: MPHULO

4.2.4.1 Background

Mpholo is the oldest of three brothers. He has two younger half-brothers that share the same mother. He has no knowledge where his father is and has no communication with him. He is currently staying with his maternal grandparents and his uncle, the mother's brother. Mpholo's mother visited his grandmother four years ago, with her three children. She told her at the time she was going to work and would be fetching the children after work.

The mother never came back. His maternal grandparents have tried to contact her, but were unable to get hold of her. They have no knowledge of the father's whereabouts, thus they were unable to contact him. It has been four years and the mother has not made any attempt to contact her children. His maternal grandparents struggle to come to terms with the fact that their daughter just walked away and

leave her children. His maternal grandmother particularly, has not worked through her disappointment in her daughter.

She feels that her daughter could have chosen a different solution than just abandoning her children and this makes the grandmother feel as if she has failed as a mother. The maternal grandparents are struggling to help their grandchildren with their homework and at times feel insecure about their own abilities to help them. His grandmother mentions that she has no choice but to take her grandchildren in, since she can't bear the thought of them going to an orphanage and being separated from one another.

4.2.4.2 Observations during the interview

Mpholo is a shy and reserved boy. He appears very sad and confused. He mentions that the only person he is able to talk to is his uncle that lives with the family. He struggled to form a relationship with the researcher and only after a while did he start to relax and speak more openly.

During the session Mpholo kept pulling his hair or twisting his hair around his finger. He struggled to make eye contact and looked down when he answered the researcher. He talks very negative about himself and needs motivation from the researcher to do some of the activities.

4.2.4.3 Findings from projection media

DAP (Draw A Person)

Mpholo is a very discontented young man. He feels sad about his parents and has many unanswered questions about *how* any parent can just leave their children like that. He is afraid of rejection and feels that his parents rejected him.

He often gets angry, that turns into anger when he struggles to understand and explain. He mentions that: "...*sometimes I am angry and I don't understand why*". He tries not to think about what his parents did to him, in order to not feel rejected and sad. He has a strong bond with his uncle and puts a lot of emphasis on his friends.

Themes

The *DAP* projection test generated the following main themes:

- attachment disorder

- importance of friends
- sadness about parents
- rejection
- afraid of rejection
- avoidance

KFD (Kinetic Family Drawing)

Mpholo shows little attachment to his maternal grandparents and seems to bond only with his uncle. He mentions that his grandparents "...*don't understand him and that he feels he can't talk to them about things that bother him*". He mentions that he spends time with his uncle talking about matters that is troubling him – and that it helps. He says his little brothers are annoying and he does not like spending time with them.

Themes

The *Incomplete Sentences* exposed the following main themes:

- attachment difficulties
- conflict

Island

From Mpholo's *Island* drawing it appears that he has a good relationship with his uncle, but that seems to be his only close relationship. He has a relationship with his brother and maternal grandparents, but it is superficial.

In his *Island* he puts his parents far away from him where they are never able to come close to him and will not be able to hurt him anymore.

Themes

The *Island Projection Test* yielded the following main themes:

- resentment towards his parents
- attachment difficulties
- avoidance

TAT (Thematic Apperception Test)

Mpholo struggles academically but show resilience to try and get better. He mentions through his projections that: "...*the boy is stressed and very tired, work is sometimes very difficult*". In Mpholo's projections he further tends to have a distorted view of relationships between a man and woman. There is always in a kind of struggle in a relationship. He mentions the following:

"... a man has a relationship with both of the women"

"...the wife did something wrong and the husband is upset".

From his TAT's results it is clear that he sees no long-term happiness in a relationship.

He appeared to have a caring relationship with his grandmother and a possible desire to show her that he will succeed and one day be able to help her, as she has helped him. He said, "...*the man allowed his grandmother to stay with him and that he wants her close to him so that he can take care of her*". Mpholo seems to have a lot of unresolved feelings towards his parents' abandonment. He has questions of *why* and *how* they could abandon him, but he is unable to get the answers – that he so desperately needs from his parents.

In his projection tests he mentioned the following:

"The young boy is sitting at the window looking up at the stars and thinking why his parents did what they did".

"He sees a falling star and hopes that one day he will get an explanation".

"They abandoned him and he feels rejected and is now afraid of rejection".

He resents his parents for doing this to him, but at the same time he misses them and wishes they would come back. He mentions that: "...*a young boy is sitting alone and misses his parents very much*".

Themes

The *TAT* projection test exposed the following main themes:

- academic struggle
- relationship problems
- attachment difficulties
- rejection
- abandonment
- resentment towards his parents
- longing for parents
- unresolved feelings towards parents

Incomplete sentences

It seems that Mpholo is struggling academically. He also mentions a deep anger towards his parents for rejecting and abandoning him. Mpholo has a deep fear of being rejected by people close to him, as well as his friends.

Themes

The *Incomplete Sentences* yielded the following main themes:

- academic struggling
- rejection
- abandonment
- anger towards parents
- cruelty of parents

4.2.4.4 Sub-conclusions and common themes: Mpholo

A few themes kept recurring throughout the various projection tests, as well as the general discussion. Mpholo shows unresolved feelings towards his parents and experiences feelings of rejection and abandonment. He is also experiencing disorganized-insecure attachment and finds support in his friends.

4.2.5 Participant 5: LETHABA

4.2.5.1 Background

Lethaba is one of a pair of twins and also has an older half-brother, Mpholo, who is Participant 4. He is currently staying with his maternal grandparents and his uncle, the mother's brother. Lethaba's father also lives in Pretoria, but he has no interest in raising his children. According to the maternal grandparents the father never visits or contacts his children. There is also no financial aid coming from him.

The grandparents struggle to come to terms with the fact that their daughter can just walk away and leave her children. The grandma, especially, has not worked through her disappointment with her daughter – she feels her daughter could have chosen a different solution than just abandoning her children – and this makes the grandmother feel as if she has failed as a mother.

His grandparents are struggling to help the children with their homework and at times they feel insecure about their own abilities to help their grandchildren. His grandmother mentions that she had no choice but to take her grandchildren in, because she couldn't bear the thought of them going to an orphanage and being separated from one another.

4.2.5.2 Observations during the interview

Lethaba is a very active and talkative young boy. He struggled to concentrate and became very restless about 30 minutes into the interview. He spoke very fast and the researcher had to ask him to speak slower so that the information could be captured correctly. He made good eye contact during the session and showed good self-worth and confidence. He appears to be very angry and through his assessment he talks constantly about killing, hurting, conflict and violence.

4.2.5.3 Findings from the projection media

DAP (Draw A Person)

Lethaba seems to be a very active and outgoing young boy, but in his *DAP* he draws a little boy that is afraid of everyone. He mentions being bullied and that makes him sad. He said following during the *DAP*: "...someone at school beats him".

It appears that Lethaba is confused about his abandonment by his mother. He mentions that: "...*he thought that she had died, but later realised that she left him*". He does not mention a father and only says: "... *his mother had lots of dads*". He mentions that he often gets nightmares about a girl killing a boy and the nightmares are recurring.

Themes

The *DAP* projection test yielded the following main themes:

- distorted idea of relationships
- longing for mother
- sadness
- conflict
- fear
- nightmares

KFD (Kinetic Family Drawing)

Lethaba has a very good relationship with his twin brother and tends to find his happiness in the things that they do together.

He mentioned that: "...*he is only happy when his brother can play with him*". When his brother can't, or won't play with him, he gets very angry or sad. It doesn't seem that Lethaba has a very close relationship with the rest of the family and sees them as angry, shouting or sad.

Themes

The *KFD Projection Test* generated the following main themes:

- anger
- sadness
- attachment difficulties
- conflict

Island

From the *Island* drawing it appears that Lethaba has a close relationship with his two brothers and his maternal uncle. He shows little relationship with his primary caregivers – his maternal grandparents. He also mentions that he is bullied by some children at school and that he wants them to be on the other *Island*, where they can't get to him.

Lethaba places his mother on the same *Island* as himself, which seems that he is longing for a close relationship with her. On the other *Island* he places his father with his maternal grandparents – which may suggest that he has unresolved feelings for his father, and that hinders their relationship.

Themes

The *Island Projection Test* revealed the following main themes:

- attachment difficulties
- conflict
- longing for parents

TAT (Thematic Apperception Test)

Lethaba sees a good mother as someone who is able to take care of them. He says that: "...*she is a good mother because she brings them food*". According to Lethaba a good father is someone who is there for the child. He expressed following: "...*A father is someone who helps a child when he needs him*".

It seems that Lethaba has some unresolved feelings of anger, which leads to aggressive behaviour. In his projection tests he mentions that: "... *he killed the bear and opened up his body and ate all the insides and drank the blood*".

It seems that when the family are together something or someone brings danger and destroys the family. In some of his projections he mentions the following:

"...the robber took the gun and killed the baby bear, he then killed the dad and the mom and left a letter telling them that he destroyed all the people".

"...the mom took the basket and they went on a picnic with the children and then danger came with a lot of fighting".

Themes

The *TAT Projection Test* yielded the following main themes:

- longing for his mother
- longing for father
- anger
- danger
- fear

Incomplete sentences

Lethaba mentions that he remembers a time when his father shouted at him and that made him sad. He says that: *"...sometimes my father liked to shout at me when I was sleeping"*. He talks about his mother without much emotion.

Themes

The *Incomplete Sentences* showed the following main theme:

- parental alienation

4.2.5.4 Sub-conclusion and common themes: Lethaba

There were a few themes that kept recurring throughout the various projection tests, as well as in the general discussion. Lethaba shows feelings of fear and sadness and considerable anger and conflict. In his projections he shows a longing for his parents.

4.2.6 Participant 6: THABO

4.2.6.1 Background

Thabo is the twin brother of Lethaba, participant 5. They share the same background.

4.2.6.2 Observations during the assessment

Thabo is a shy and reserved boy. In the beginning of the session he was very shy and spoke softly. He did not form a good rapport with the researcher at the

beginning, but after a while he started to relax and spoke more openly. He comes across as being sad and mentions that he is being bullied at school.

He tended to play with his hands or his clothes during the sessions, which may indicate that he was anxious. He struggled to make eye contact with the researcher and tended to look down when he answered the questions. At times he spoke so softly that the researcher had to ask him to repeat what he had said.

4.2.6.3 Findings from the projection media

DAP (Draw A Person)

It seems that Thabo is struggling socially. He mentions *that: "...he has only one friend, but would like more friends"*. It seems that he is bullied and finds it difficult to have friends. He says in his *DAP* that: *"...he gets angry when other people hits him – and it happens often"*.

He mentions that he wants more friends. He pronounces he is scared of the dark and the unknown. It appears that Thabo has unresolved feelings towards his abandonment by his parents and still feels sad about it. He said: *"...I am sad because my parents are gone"*.

Themes

The *DAP* projection test disclosed the following main themes:

- struggling socially
- importance of friends
- bullied at school
- unresolved feelings towards parental abandonment
- sadness

KFD (Kinetic Family Drawing)

It seems that Thabo has a good relationship with his maternal grandparents and feels secure and comfortable with them.

Themes

The *KFD* projection test yielded the following main themes:

- good relationship

- secure and happy

Island

Thabo places his father on the same *Island* as himself which seems that he is longing for a close relationship with him. On the other *Island* he places his mother with his maternal grandfather which might suggest that he has unresolved feelings towards his mother – that hampers their relationship.

Themes

The *Island* projection test yielded the following main themes:

- unresolved feelings towards parents
- longing for parents

TAT (Thematic Apperception Test)

Thabo sees a mother as someone who takes care of his basic needs. He mentions that: *"...a mother is someone who loves them"*. In the projection of the bears, Thabo sees his father as helping him. While he is with his father he is happy, but then something happens and the boy becomes sad and fearful.

He makes the following remark: *"...the little bear is happy because he is with his father, but then something happens and the baby bear will be sad because they have to leave"*. He says the following about his father: *"...a father is someone who is helping his son and feeds him"*.

In Thabo's projection, the feelings of sadness runs through most of his cards. He tends to long for friends and to be accepted. He says that: *"...the lion is very sad because he has no friends"*. Thabo shows little flexibility and in the card where the lion chases the monkey; he says the lion will catch the monkey and eat him.

Thabo shows fear of the unknown and overall sadness in his projections. He shows unresolved feelings towards the abandonment by his parents and longs to be with his father. In one projection he told the following story:

"The boy is sad and turns around and leaves his mother and dad".

"The mother is going away to her place".

"The boy is going to his dad".

"He would rather be with his dad than with his mom".

Themes

The *TAT Projection Test* showed the following main themes:

- longing for parents
- abandonment
- sadness
- fear of the unknown
- nightmares
- unresolved feelings towards parents

Incomplete sentences

In Thabo's Incomplete Sentences he only agrees to write something about his mother and did not want to write anything about his father. He wrote the following impersonal sentence: *"...his mother is his uncle's sister"*.

Themes

The incomplete sentences yielded the following main theme:

- attachment difficulties

4.2.6.4 Sub-conclusion and common themes: Thabo

There were a few themes that kept recurring throughout the various projection tests, as well as the general discussion. Thabo shows feelings of fear and has unresolved feelings towards his parents. He struggles with feelings of rejection and abandonment, and shows a longing to be with his parents. He is experiencing disorganized-insecure attachment difficulties.

4.2.7 Participant 7: CAYLA

4.2.7.1 Background

Cayla's mother fell pregnant with her when she was only 16 years old. The father was 15 years of age at the time. During the pregnancy the father and the paternal grandparents wanted nothing to do with the new baby.

The pregnancy and the birth were very difficult and Cayla was born *via* a caesarean. For the first 22 months since birth her mother cared for Cayla and was – according to her maternal grandmother – a very good mother. Her mother started working and met a much older man at her new office. They started dating and the mother and Cayla moved in with him. He started out as a very good individual, but turned out to be an alcoholic and an abuser. Her mother brought Cayla to her grandmother – on several occasions – when things were not going well at home.

The mother married the man and they had a little girl. Cayla was given to her grandmother to look after her. The maternal grandmother became Cayla's legal guardian. The mother later divorced the abusive husband, but never tried to mend the relationship between Cayla and herself. Cayla kept living with her maternal grandmother.

Currently the mother is dating Cayla's biological father and they are trying to mend their relationship with Cayla. Her mother and biological father want Cayla to come and live with them, but Cayla refuses. She has no relationship with them and wants to stay with her grandmother.

After 15 years, the paternal grandparents want to be involved in Cayla's life and form a relationship with her, but Cayla is refusing to build any form of relationship with them. Cayla shows a good bond with her maternal grandmother and also calls her '*mother*'. She also has a good relationship with her maternal uncle and calls him her '*brother*'.

4.2.7.2 Observations during the interviews

Cayla appears to be in control and sure of herself. At times she becomes anxious and tucks at her cloths or lick her lips. She shows little or no emotion when she talks about her past and her parents. She shows resentment towards her biological parents and her paternal family. She talks freely and with confidence. She makes good eye contact and is very friendly, but reserved.

4.2.7.3 Findings from the projection media

DAP (Draw A Person)

Cayla feels rejected by her parents. She mentions that: *"...they did not want her when she was a baby"*. She feels that she needs to show them that she will succeed, no matter what they did to her. She says that: *"...I will be a success and show them"*. She has an abnormal drive to succeed and it is powered by her anger towards her parents. The researcher asked her if she was trying to get back at her parents, and she replied 'yes'. She is constantly trying to prove to herself and her parents that she will be the best that she can be, and does not need them to be able to succeed.

Cayla has a fear of losing her grandmother, in her words: *"I am afraid to lose my grandmother"*.

Themes

The *DAP Projection Test* exposed the following main themes:

- obsession with success
- wants to prove herself to her parents
- fear of losing her maternal grandmother

KFD (Kinetic Family Drawing)

Cayla is torn between her feelings of cheerfulness and her unexplained feelings of sadness. She mentions that: *"I am happy but also very sad sometimes"*. In her family drawing she did not draw her mother or father and told the researcher that: *"...I do not want them in my life and I will never accept them as my parents"*.

Themes

The *KFD Projection Test* showed the following main themes:

- mixed feelings of contentment and depression
- rejecting her parents

Island

It appears that Cayla has a good relationship with her maternal uncle and spends a lot of time with him. She seems to have a good bond with him and feels that he is more of a father figure to her than her biological father.

Cayla refers to her maternal grandmother as her own mother and calls her 'mother'. She feels that her maternal grandmother is the only mother she needs and shares a good bond with her. She has a good relationship with her maternal uncle's girlfriend, as well as her own half-sister. Cayla placed both her biological parents at the far-end *Island* where they cannot reach or hurt her. She shows no relationship with her biological parents.

Themes

The *Island Projection Test* generated the following main themes:

- relationship with family attachment
- negative relationship with parents

TAT (Thematic Apperception Test)

Cayla displays feelings of rejection and abandonment which have caused pain and sadness in a lot of her projections. She mentions that:

"...she will show them that she can play even if her parents gave up".

"...she is sad about her relationship with her mother and feels that her mother does not care about her".

She sees her mother as cruel and has questions about *how* her mother could do that to her. She mentions that: *"...she has a cruel mother"*. This illustrates attachment problems and a negative relationship between Cayla and her mother. She also feels she is not important to her mother – and helpless – and swore to never feel like that again.

Cayla's father came back into her life when she was 15 years old. He, as well as her paternal family, wants to build a relationship with her. She is torn between feelings of abandonment and insecurity, and she is longing to find reasons for their actions. She made the following comments on a few of her *TAT* projection cards.

"The girl is very sad because of her parents".

"She saw how her father treated her mother and he also started to hurt her".

"The girl felt helpless and wanted to give up".

"It was difficult for the girl to see how her father is treating her mother and she decided to run away and live with family".

Because of Cayla's past, she finds people deceitful and not always what they say they are. She struggles to trust and build meaningful relationships with friends and family.

Cayla desperately wants to fit in and be normal like all the other children and not have a past that is tormenting her. She mentions that:

"She wants a better life without sadness and unhappiness".

"The girl is young and she did not grow up in a normal house like all the other normal children".

"Her mother lived with a man that abused her".

"The mother always stayed with the man and the daughter wanted to know why. The mother always wanted the girl away from her".

"The girl feels rejected and that her mother is throwing her away and she feels like she was not important enough for her mother".

Themes

The *TAT Projection Test* yielded the following main themes:

- hopelessness
- sadness
- will show her parents that she can
- feels her mother is cruel
- feels ejected
- feels pity for her mother
- struggles to trust

- victim of abusive stepfather
- abandonment
- helplessness

Incomplete sentences

According to Cayla, her biological father deserted and rejected her when she was a baby and her biological mother also did not want her. She mentions that: *"...my father is not like a father to me and that he is more like an uncle"*, and *"...I have never seen him as a father"*. She resents that they have now appeared in her life at the age of 15 and want a relationship with her. For Cayla it is too late and she is struggling to accept them as her parents. She has very negative feelings towards her parents. She writes that: *"I wonders if my biological parents really wanted me or are they just acting like they want me"* and *"I am struggling to accept my parents"*.

Because of her history she is afraid of being rejected and tends to keep people emotionally distant. She guides her own relationships and friends in the same manner, to ensure that she does not get hurt. She writes that: *"...I am afraid of being rejected or getting hurt by someone"*. Cayla finds it difficult to trust people and let them get close to her. She just wants to fit in, and it troubles her that she has all these past problems and that she cannot get away from, and has a longing just to be normal.

She mentions that: *"I feel insecure"* and *"wish to have a normal life without all the drama"*. She sees her mother as weak and blames her for not being stronger, and making sure that she had not been abused when she was younger. She said that: *"I regret that I couldn't help my mother when she needed my help"*.

Themes

The *Incomplete Sentences* method displayed the following main themes:

- struggling to accept parents
- afraid of rejection
- afraid of getting hurt
- struggling to trust
- negative feelings towards parents

- insecurities
- importance of friends
- just wants to fit in and be normal

Sub-conclusion and common themes: Cayla

There were a few themes that kept on recurring throughout the various projection tests as well as the general discussion. Cayla sees her life with her grandmother as different to other children and shows a longing to just be normal. She shows feelings of fear, sadness and is afraid of rejection. She is scared of getting emotionally hurt and is experiencing disorganized-insecure attachment difficulties. Cayla sees her friends as her support system.

4.3 CONCLUSION

Several common themes arose from the projection media tests – done as part of the research study at hand. Some of the themes were only applicable to the children whose parents had left them – or abandoned them – while others were only applicable to the decease of the parents.

However, there were also overlapping themes that show the grandparenting involvement in these grandchildren's lives.

In chapter five the researcher will combine the findings of chapter 4 to formulate and answer the research question.

CHAPTER 5

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the present study was to investigate the psychological effects on grandchildren – when they are being raised by their grandparents. The particular focus was on the grandchildren's social and emotional well-being.

In Chapter 5 the findings of the research project are summarised and integrated. Conclusions are drawn and scope for future research is presented.

5.2 SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

5.2.1 Findings from the literature study

In Chapter 2 a survey of the existing – and published – research literature was presented and discussed, with the emphasis on the impact on grandchildren, when they need to be raised by their grandparents in an extended family. From the literature it is evident that in a large pool of research abroad, considerable emphasis has been placed on the grandparent, and very little on the grandchild. However, the grandparents correspondingly struggle with a lot of difficulties when they have to become parents for the second time – they struggle financially, emotionally and physically. The literature also indicates that the grandparents' attitude towards becoming a parent to their grandchild can also be a rewarding and fulfilling task. The obstacles that have an influence on the grandparent, unsurprisingly, also affect the grandchild.

It is also realised that the reason why a grandchild is taken away from his parents – and placed with the grandparents – has an enormous impact on the transition of the grandchild. The grandchildren might experience insecure or disorganised attachment and therefore make it difficult for both the grandparent and grandchild to bond with each other. It was also clear from the literature study that there is virtually no research done on the grandchild – from a South African perspective – and that the necessity for this research is long overdue.

As cited in Chapter 1, most countries are setting up legal advice – as well as support groups – for effected families, where they can become involved and be assisted. Although this phenomenon is very common in South Africa, very little research has been done to look into the structures of these extended families and lend support and care to them.

After an intensive search through the literature, with reference to the psychological effects – on both grandparents and grandchildren – it became clear that many other countries recognise the impact that the reconstructed – or extended – families have on society. The need arose to explore the situation in South Africa, with the view of identifying and supporting the effected families’.

5.2.2 Findings from the interviews with the grandparents

During the interviews with the grandparents the following emerged:

- no contact with the parents and no financial support for the grandchildren
- they struggle to communicate with the grandchildren
- they feel out of their depth with the academic work of the grandchildren
- feel tired and not always emotionally fit to deal with their grandchildren's emotional outbursts

5.2.3 Findings from the research

In one of the research results from the current study it was found that there are some themes that are universal to all the grandchildren. After closer inspection, it became clear that the findings divided themselves into two categories:

- 1) The first category consists of the themes – where the effects were not due to the influence of the grandparents – but to the fact that all the children had lost their parents.
- 2) In the second category, the findings suggested that the grandparents’ emotional feelings about raising their grandchildren played an important role.

Moreover, it seems that, when grandparents have a good support structure from family and friends, their overall outlook is more positive; this was also reflected in the grandchildren's emotional state.

From the findings, two main categories of effects were identified:

- 1) themes where grandparents had *no effect* on the grandchild
- 2) themes where grandparents had either a *positive effect* or a *negative effect* on the grandchildren.

5.3 CATEGORY 1

THEMES WHERE GRANDPARENTS HAD NO EFFECT ON THE GRANDCHILD

The following themes were displayed by all the grandchildren (n=7), irrespective of the background situation or emotional state of the grandparent. The results suggest that the effects were more likely due to the fact that these children had lost their parents, and not so much that they were being raised by their grandparents. This implies that they would most likely show the same themes, had these children been raised by other relatives.

These universal themes were as follows:

- fear of the unknown
- longing for parents
- attachment to friends
- disorganized-insecure attachment difficulties towards the grandparents

From the present research it became clear that the grandchildren struggled to form relationships with their grandparent(s) – the generation gap might have been too large. In most of the case studies it was found that the grandchild formed a better attachment with an uncle or a cousin closer to his own age.

The above research outcome is supported by the findings of Conner (2006:59, 172-184): when a child has ambivalent-insecure attachments – he looks for attachment over exploration. Such a child lacks confidence and struggles to explore; he can be doubtful of the ability of his caregivers to provide the essential care for him. Common signs are extreme or prolonged hanging-on, exaggerated distress and resistance to comfort. A child who is confused shows disorganized or disoriented attachments; he might also show fear towards his caregiver, or show inconsistent attachment

behaviour. He struggles to use the caregiver as a source of security – or a platform – for exploration.

Disorganized attachment is common in a child where there is abuse or fearsome behaviour. Conner (2006: 59, 172-184) further emphasises that, for some of these children, the caregiver may be emotionally, physically or psychologically absent.

Both Participant 4 (Mpholo) and 7 (Cayla) knew that their grandparents were there to support their basic needs, but when there were emotional problems and insecurities, the two tended to look elsewhere for comfort. Participant 4 (Mpholo) shared his emotional problems with his maternal uncle, however, found it difficult to talk to his grandparents. Participant 7 (Cayla) formed a strong bond with her maternal uncle and found him to be a source of comfort and acceptance.

The above findings are supported by the findings of Conner (2006:59, 172-184) where he maintains that,

"Avoidant-insecure attachment behaviour is demonstrated when a child implies a dominance of exploration-over-attachment. The child can carry out tasks independently, but the child will not revert back to the caregiver for comfort in times of distress. The child may hide his/her emotions from the caregiver during times of distress because the caregiver may be perceived as uncaring or rejecting, but not abusive".

From the results of the current study, it appeared that a child, who entered into his grandparent's household – when he was younger – had a better bond with the grandparent than in cases where the grandchild was older. The older child rather moved towards peers or other members of the family to form attachments. These findings contradict what was found by Saywer and Dubowitz (1994:18, 587-597), namely,

"The age of the grandchild is also important, and it will influence the adjustment process. A child who enters kinship at a more mature age will adjust better than a child who enters kinship at a very young age".

The findings cannot exclude the argument that a child's traumatic experiences – before coming to the grandparent – did not have an effect on him and might even have an influence on the child's ability to form a relationship with the grandparent. As described by Bowlby (1969/1982), the reason why they are being raised by their grandparents could be relevant, since children – with a history of trauma – may find it difficult to form meaningful bonds with their grandparents.

Hayslip, Shore, Henderson and Lambert (1998:53:164-173) as well as Pruchno and McKenney (2002:444-452) mention that this is particularly true when grandparents need to raise their grandchildren. The grandchildren may have experienced a great deal of trauma and abuse earlier, and that may have led to their emotional and behavioural problems.

5.4 CATEGORY 2

THEMES GENERATED WHERE GRANDPARENTS HAD EITHER A POSITIVE EFFECT OR A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THEIR GRANDCHILDREN

In contrast to what is reported above, the following themes were displayed – depending on the emotional outlook of their grandparents. In cases where the grandparents had a *positive* outlook on the situation, the grandchildren also tended to display positive themes. The opposite was also true, namely that grandparents who displayed a *negative* outlook, tended to generate more *negative* themes in their grandchildren.

In Table 2, the identified themes are summarised.

Themes identified in the grandchildren	Grandparents with a positive outlook	Grandparents with a negative outlook
Rejection		x
Conflict		x
Fear		x
Abandonment		x
Unresolved feelings towards parents		x
Fear of rejection		x
Fear of getting hurt		x
Feeling secure	x	
Happiness	x	
Good relationship with grandparent	x	
Positive feelings about the family	x	

TABLE 2 Themes identified by the grandchildren when their grandparents had either a *positive* or *negative* outlook

Table 2 displays what the effect was – on the grandchildren – when the grandparents had a different outlook on their new, extended, circumstances.

Participants 2 (Chiree) and 3 (Talista) indicated that, even though their parents had died, they formed a good relationship with their grandfather. They also had a good support structure from surrounding family members. Even though a grandchild still misses his parents and shows a natural longing for them, he may feel loved and secured because of the positive outlook of the grandfather, along with family support.

On the other hand, the grandchild whose grandparent felt that taking on the child was a burden – and that he had no choice in the matter – tended to see the experience as negative. The grandchild then had little or no relationship with his grandparent(s). They tended rather to form a positive attachment / relationship with someone else in the family system, such as an uncle or cousin, or they tended to fill the gap with friends.

The grandparents of participant 1 (Nicoleen) and participants 4 (Mpholo), 5 (Lethaba) and 6 (Thabo) felt that they were not as young and energetic as they used to be when they were younger. They lacked the ability to help with scholastic and emotional support. The grandparent(s) felt that they were ill-equipped to help the grandchild with his scholastic difficulties. The above problems emphasize the research done by Cox (2000:253-267), where he mentions that, "*...grandparents are often thrown into re-parenting for which they may be ill-prepared, leaving them feeling unsure and confused*".

As was seen with Participant 1(Nicoleen), as well as Participant 4(Mpholo), difficulties tended to create conflict between the grandparent and the grandchild. Goodman and Silverstein (2002:42, 676-689) allege that intergenerational conflict is mostly produced by the same circumstances that caused the assumption of the care by the grandparents.

According to Goldberg-Glen and Thornton (2005:65-82), even though being a parent for the second time involves huge responsibility and it has its share of challenges – some grandparents find it satisfying and it gives them a sense of purpose and a feeling of belonging.

In the case of Participants 2(Chiree) and 3(Talista), the grandchildren felt loved and experienced security because they had grandparents who enjoyed the opportunity of being parents for the second time. They were also surrounded by a healthy support system. In these two case studies, the children also illustrated themes of being happy and secured.

It is also likely that the additional support given by the extended families in Participants 2(Chiree) and 3(Talista) had a *positive* impact on both the grandparents' and grandchild's emotional well-being. Musil (2000:29-145) is of the opinion that when the grandparents reach out, receive external support and help from family and friends – they also experience better health and life satisfaction.

In addition, Szinovacz (1998) supports the findings by declaring that – when the grandparents are *positive* – their attitudes can have a direct, indirect or reciprocal effect on both themselves (grandparents) and the grandchild. Direct influence includes having a positive effect on their grandchildren through activities and interactions. These actions also help to fuse together family values, history and cultural values – they open up the opportunity for a quality education experience for the custodial grandchild.

5.5 CHALLENGES

5.5.1 Group discussions

A group discussion is a generally an ideal tool to gain additional insight. The rationale was to give the grandchildren a setting where other children who had the same background, they would then not feel threatened to talk about what was bothering them.

Unfortunately, the CSC was (*correctly so*) of the opinion that it was not a good idea to put all the grandchildren together in a group. They figured – because they felt that it would not be in the best interest of the child – that some of the children were not fully aware of *why* they were living with their grandparents. They felt that it might have been emotionally harmful for them to be involved in discussions – about rejection and abandonment issues – for which they were ill-prepared.

5.5.2 Other external factors

The emotional well-being of a person is influenced by a multitude of factors. In the research at hand, the effects of the grandparents on their grandchildren were particularly explored. However, it is also possible that other extraneous variables also play a factor in a grandchild's psychological well-being. Aspects such as poverty, socio-economic status, cultural differences, demise *versus* abandonment

and many others, may also have an influence on the psychological effect of the grandchild. There was, however, still a positive correlation in the themes generated – throughout the research – which increased the validity of the results.

5.6 CONCLUSION

After an intensive search through the literature, with reference to the psychological effects – on both grandparents and grandchildren – it is clear that many other countries recognise the impact that the reconstructed – or extended – families have on society. There is a need to explore the situation in South Africa, with the view of identifying and supporting similar families – to become well-balanced young adults.

5.7 FUTURE RESEARCH

There needs to be further research done involving children with similar histories – as the participants in the present research project – replicate the study in order to explore this very sensitive matter much *deeper* and *wider*.

It is owed to every grandchild caught in such dire circumstances to let its voice be heard.

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